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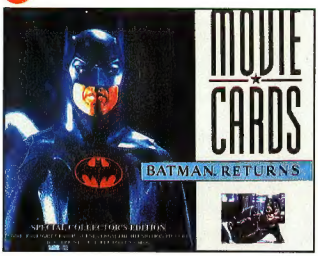

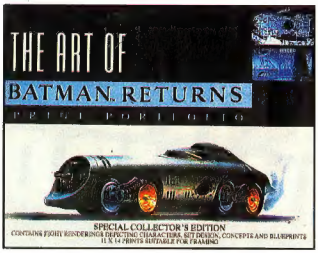

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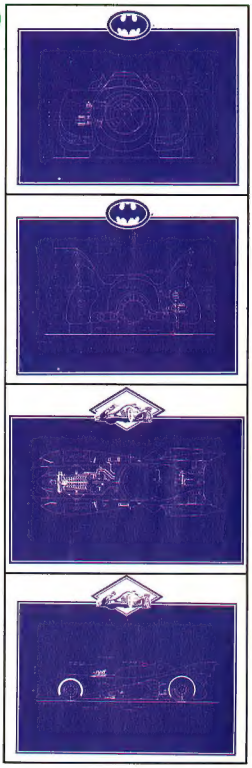

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CATWOMAN! PENGUIN! BATMOBILE! BLACK CAT!

Tom de Falco & Dennis O'Neil offer a short history of

ADAPTING COMICS FOR THE SCREEN

As the public flocks to *Batman Returns* to see both the undulations of Michele Pfeiffer as Catwoman, and the ululations of Danny DeVito as the grimmest Penguin to date, it would seem that comic books and the movies have always enjoyed the perfect symbiotic relationship: the pitting of good against evil, the wildest, most extravagant characters, so well as an almost always happy ending conspire to provide totally satisfying entertainment.

But that's not the way it's always been. Comics, born in the late '30s, struggled for years to achieve the acceptance they have today, slugging it out in the serial swamp and B-movie limbo of Hollywood.

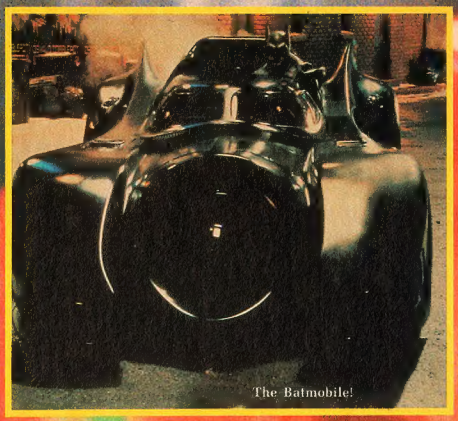
The widely popular Superman first made it to the screen as an animation cartoon in the early '40s. From there, Superman had a radio show in the '40s, plus two popular movie serials with Kirk Alyn playing the Man of Steel. However, it was only in 1951—more than a decade after his beginning—that he appeared in a feature film: *Superman and the Mole Men.*

Still, it was a B-movie, and even though Superman flourished in the new medium of television throughout the '50s with the tragic George Reeves as the superhero, it was not until 1978 that Superman burst again onto the big screen, this time in a major motion picture. *Superman* with Christopher Reeve was an incredible success and spawned three sequels—each with diminishing returns.

Batman, besides stinting for the radio Superman, had also appeared in movie serials in '40s, and in the '60s enjoyed immense popularity on television and in one movie (of which not many people have anything good to say). But in 1989, the major motion picture *Batman* appeared to the critical and popular acclaim, and has since remained on the national consciousness.

Why were these movies so successful? A part of their success can be attributed to the faithfulness with which they portray the comic-book characters from whom they were adapted. "Two of their big screen movies starring Superman," says Dennis O'Neil, editor-in-chief of DC

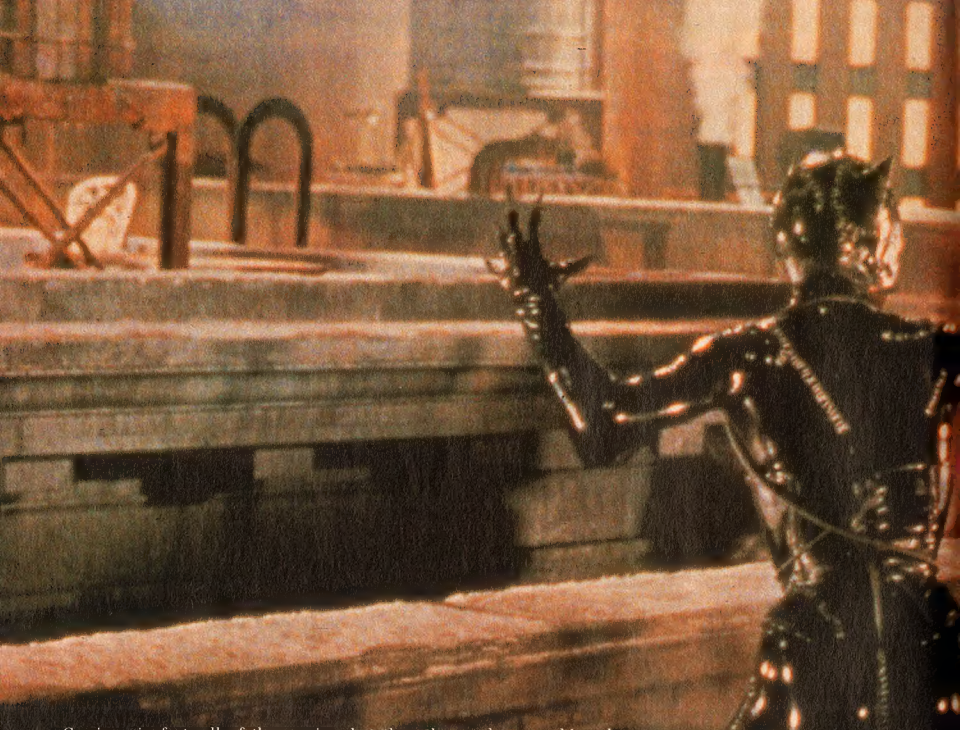
Michael Keaton as The Batman.



The Batmobile!

BATMAN RETURNS SPECIAL

By TERRI HARDIN



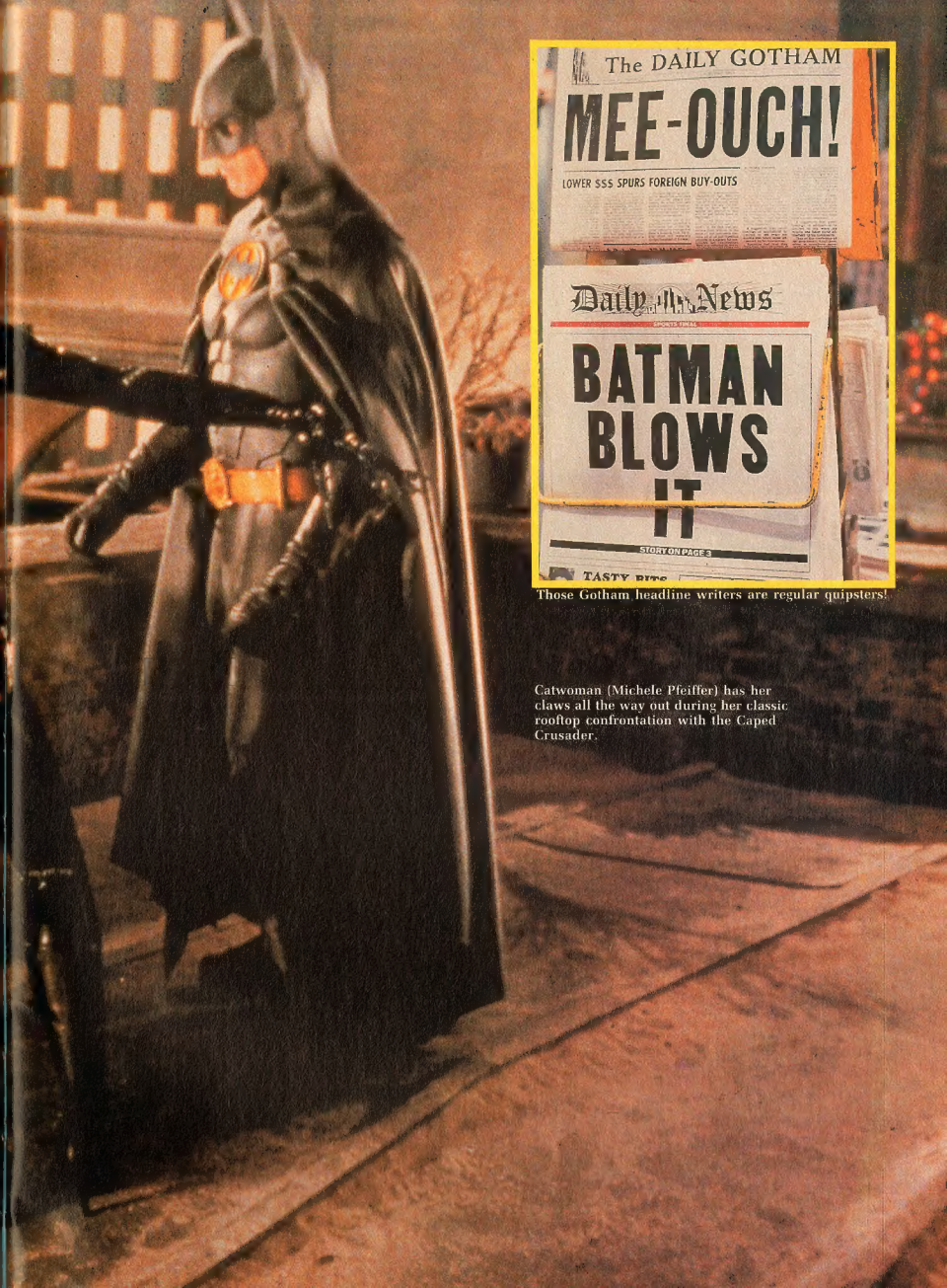
Comics. "in fact, all of the movies starring Superman, including the one that was on the small screen on television, which used a lot of stock footage from old movies to show the disintegration of the planet; and even the Max Fleischer cartoon, which dates back to 1940 or '41, all that was pretty much taken from the comics, allowing for the differences in the media and so forth. *Batman* is also an accurate lifting of the comic book."

Tom de Falco, editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics Group, agrees. "The Batman and early Superman movies were very faithful to the spirit of their characters, and these have proven very successful," says de Falco. "The problem that you often have when you're going from one medium to the other medium, is that you have to make adjustments. When TV people or movie people deal with a comic-book character, what they do is decide to reinvent the wheel. People think they're creating something new and exciting—TV and movies are different than comic books and they have to make adjustments. We accept that fact that they're different, but then they end up trashing the essential part of the character. The audience turns against it and they end up having a failure."

Marvel has experienced this disappointment first hand with *Howard the Duck* and the TV movie *Captain America*. And unlike DC, Marvel has yet to have one of the major characters hit the big screen. However, that soon may change: a Spiderman movie is currently in the works, headed up by none other than James Cameron, of *Terminator* fame.

Although the big-budget movies are reserved for the major players of the comic world, the independents have also made their appearances. Ralph Bakshi made a name for himself with his big-screen animation of R. Crumb's *Fritz the Cat* (1978), and the sequel *Nine Lives of Fritz the Cat* which were way too hot (X-rated) for the kids. Recent times have seen *Darkman* (1990) and *The Rocketeer* (1991), both of which were adapted from independent comics.

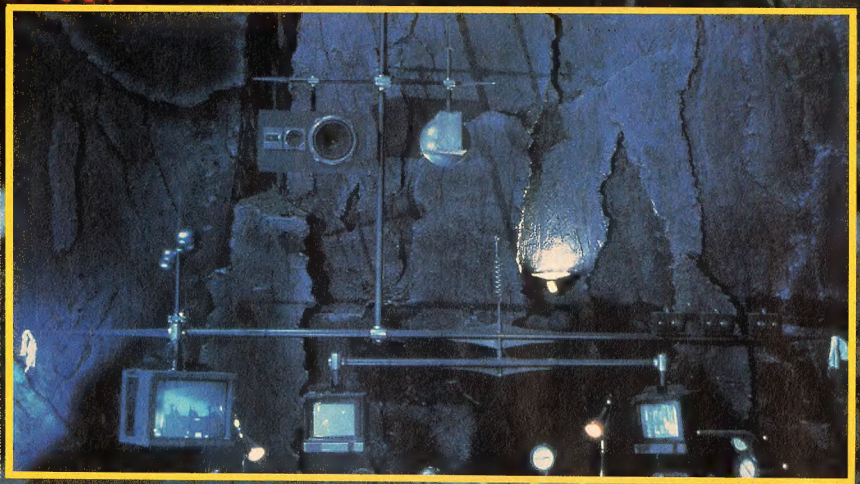
Conan the Barbarian (1982), *Conan the Destroyer* (1984), and *Red Sonja* (1985) are comic book to



Those Gotham headline writers are regular quipsters!

Catwoman (Michele Pfeiffer) has her claws all the way out during her classic rooftop confrontation with the Caped Crusader.

All Batman art TMs & © 1992 DC Comics Inc., courtesy Warner Bros.



DIDJA KNOW...?

AMATEUR DETECTIVE...
..." SEARCHING THE WASTEPAPER BASKET IN THE VICTIM'S ROOM, SHOULD, OF COURSE, BE A ROUTINE PROCEDURE..." UMM... OF COURSE! AH, SOON I SHALL BE A MAWSTER OF CRIME-FIGHTING TECHNIQUE!
HOW TO BE A DETECTIVE

Art by Bob Kane, © 1943 DC Comics, Inc.

Bruce Wayne's butler, Alfred, was invented by the scriptwriters of the first movie serial *Batman* (Columbia, 1943)—Victor McLeod, Leslie Swabacker and Harry Fraser. Alfred made a simultaneous comic book debut in *Batman* #16.

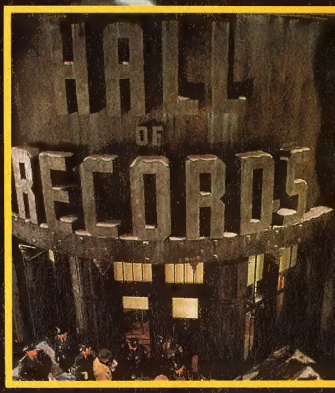
In the serial—as well as in the daily newspaper strip—the butler was a slender gentleman. In the comic book, Alfred initially exhibited considerably greater girth. By the end of the year, however, the comic book had conformed to the svelt look.

movie adaptations by way of the pulp novels. Pulps, which flourished in the '30s and '40s (to be replaced by comic books), yielded many impressive characters, such as Conan, Doc Savage, and the Shadow—all of whom have been turned into comic-book characters. (Red Sonja, although she appeared in a Robert E. Howard short story, is in no way like her movie character; and the Shadow was a radio character before he began to appear in pulps.) The success of these characters in various genres indicates not only their adaptability but their universal appeal.

While there have been other big-screen adaptations, such as *Supergirl* (1984), *Swamp Thing* (1982), and so on, the hit-or-miss quality of movie making may or may not insure the comic-book character's posterity. "We have an advantage with the comic book," says de Falco, "just because we have years and years of stories behind us. With any comic book character, we get a minimum of twelve times a year to get the story right. In the time it takes to do one movie, we're going to do 24 stories.

"So they only get one shot at one story. If you get the right screenplay and the right group of creative talents, you can get a relevant and interesting, intoxicating movie. Superheroes are a genre, and if you get the right writer in that genre, you can have a very moving thing. You get the wrong writer, and you can have trash."

Superheroes have fared better on television, where almost all of the DC and Marvel characters have appeared, at one time or another, soaking up the cathode rays in either live-action or animated series. On television, as in the movies, DC has the edge over Marvel with more characters portrayed in live-action series: Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Superboy and The Flash. Of these, *Wonder Woman* the series is regarded as one of the most faithful adaptations of comic-book character to screen. "The *Wonder Woman*



starring Linda Carter was a pretty faithful adaptation of the origin story that was published in the comics in 1940," says O'Neil. Of an earlier, failed attempt starring Cathy Lee Crosby, O'Neil says, "I don't think the people involved in it really understood what Wonder Woman was about."

As with the first Batman film, *Batman Returns* features exaggerated cross-period sets as one of its stars.

Then there was *The Incredible Hulk*, whose TV movie premiered in 1977, and whose series ran for several years. Again, adjustments had to be made to accommodate the TV media. "The Hulk TV series was faithful to the spirit of the comic book," says de Falco, "but they changed Bruce Banner's name—they called him David Banner, instead of Robert Bruce Banner. I wasn't working here at the time, but we heard the reason they didn't want to call him Bruce is because Bruce didn't sound macho enough. But the series was faithful to the character, and that ended up being a very successful show."

Although the name "Bruce" not being macho enough may be news to Batman, *The Incredible Hulk* stands as another faithful adaptation of comic book to other media, with the reward of a long-running and popular series. In 1988, a second TV movie was made that featured Hulk with other Marvel characters the Mighty Thor and Daredevil. Unfortunately, no interest was sparked in these long-standing Marvel characters, which is a loss, as far as de Falco is concerned.

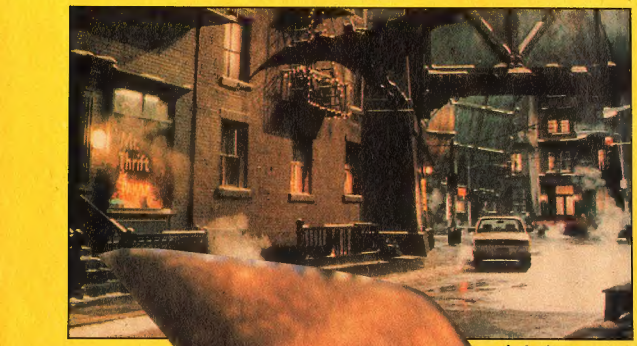
"A character that I think could be made into a fabulous movie is Mighty Thor. I didn't particularly like his television version—pretty much. I think they got everything wrong on him—but I think if they did a Mighty Thor movie that followed the spirit of the comic book, you could do just a spectacular, spectacular thing." (The Mighty Thor, the thunder-god son of Odin, is a character taken out of Norse mythology, although the Marvel version is considerably more thoughtful than the original.)

Another character that has lately made it to television was the Flash. According to O'Neil, the TV Flash had a modus operandi for the suit he was wearing that did not appear in the comics. "That was a pretty accurate comic book to television," says O'Neil. "In fact, the pilot was very accurate, and they did some things that probably the comic book guys wish they'd thought of. For example, figuring out a logical reason for him having to wear that suit. That was a nice little bit of writing.

"It was a protective device, against the potential harm caused by running that fast. The little wings on the helmet were actually aerials. His scientist friend could communicate with him.

"Justifying the costume is a good thing to do; it's probably harder for a mass audience to suspend disbelief."

Acceptance by a large, general audience has been a longstanding problem for the comics. Although the comic-book audience is huge, they are predisposed to accept things (like outlandish costumes) that, unless adequately prepared, the TV-movie or theater audience will laugh at.



A stuntman swoops low over Gotham Streets.

In a sense, audiences had been prepared for Superman and Batman by their earlier TV incarnations, so it was not as much of a hurdle for these two superheroes to flaunt their capes and long underwear. But for others, such as Hulk (who suffered a name change) and Flash (whose own long underwear required lengthy explanations) the transition has not been quite as seamless.

While the movies have added to the comic recognition, they have not particularly added to readership. Any movie, whether it's a hit or a bomb, does not appreciably garner more readers for the comics.

On the other hand, comic-book readers can react violently to any change in their superhero. According to O'Neil, "We get letters from fans who object to the characters being made into movies. Not many letters, but we get isolated grumblings, some from people who feel maybe that their hobby—their special thing—has been usurped, and others that just get angry at the violation of canonicity. And maybe the latter group just simply doesn't understand what I mentioned earlier, that if you're adapting something, it is necessary to make changes, or you have an awkward hybrid."

Artists' sketches were used to design the look for Hollywood's latest pair of costumed villains.

Michele Pfeiffer lends a vicious sensuality to her role!

De Falco says, "If it's faithful to the spirit of the comic, the readers support it. The wonderful thing about our readers is that they really want to support it. They always approach it in a very, very positive frame of mind. They're looking for it to succeed. But if it in any way, shape or form trashes the character, or is unfaithful to the character, then the readers tend to react very violently against it.

But comics to movies is far from a one-way street. Says O'Neil, "We always had one version of any big action property: the Superman movies, the Batman movies, and so on. There's a lot of movie-to-comics adaptations that both Marvel and DC do. In fact, I've written a couple of movie tie-ins. They're a little awkward because we have to have our stuff much in advance of what the movies do. They can shoot a lot closer to release date than we can script to our release date. So there's always last-minute changes they make in the movie that are not reflected in our stuff, but we come as close as we can, and we work as close to deadline as humanly possible. And when I do one of these things, I don't mind writing—as I've done—if I can introduce comics in.

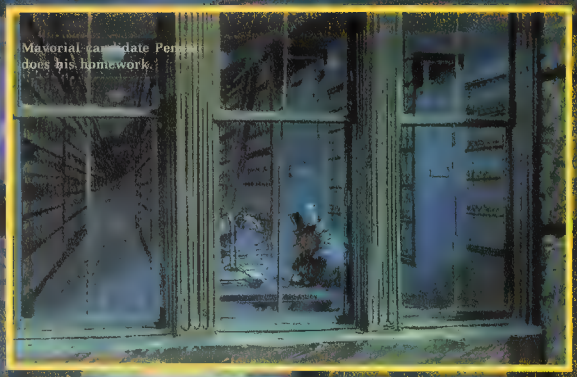
The movie tie-ins [illegible] our regular comic books as closely as we can make them. We ass[illegible] that peo[illegible]

Batman follows the Penguin across the upper Gotham skyscrapers.

ple want to get a kind of frozen version of the movie. And so far as it's possible, that's what we try to give them."

Besides reintroducing their own comic characters to the page, the comics also take regular blockbusters and turn them into comics, as Marvel did with *Robocop 2*, which was done as an upscale "graphic" novel.

Comics also learn tricks from the movies. Says O'Neil, "There's always been a dialectic between comic books and other media. Citizen *Kane*, for example. Comic book artists looked at the camera angles, and said wow, we can do that. Comic book panels in particular are movie fantasies. Every damn one of them's a movie shot."



Mayorial candidate Perry does his homework.

Batman arrives on the scene to sort out some Penguin-created chaos.

But why are comic-book characters so popular in movies these days? "The reason why action movies are so popular," says de Falco, "is because most of them are emotional roller coaster rides. I think people go to the movies to be touched emotionally. And these days, what's really getting us are the real action roller coaster rides. Because in terms of real drama, I think there's a failure of craft. I don't know if it's a problem with the writing or what, but real emotional craft, there isn't a hell of a lot of it. I'm just giving the opinions of a comic-book lunatic, but in terms of adult serious drama, I haven't seen anything that has really moved me in a while, in terms of films.

"I think that the reason superheroes are popular in the comic books is because they're just so well-suited to the medium. In terms of the general public, we're just actually getting acceptance now. I'm not sure why, but part has to be just the way our society is these days—there's crime in the streets and that sort of thing, and I think we all desperately want heroes, want someone who's gonna stop the criminals and protect us."

As *Batman Returns* continues to bring in the audiences, these editors have preferences for whom they'd next like to see on the screen. Aside from the Mighty Thor, de Falco would like to see Dr. Strange. "Dr. Strange we've gotten close to. I've even seen a screenplay, which was spectacular, but it just never went anywhere—I guess 'cause it costs millions of dollars to do movies. I would love to see Dr. Strange. They had a TV movie of Dr. Strange, which I haven't seen in many years, but at the time it came out, I thought it was terrific. It came out when *Roots* was coming out, so it was kind of ignored. But I managed to see it, and the time I saw it, which was many, many years ago, I thought it was really well done."

For his part, O'Neil says, "Green Lantern, I've thought for about 25 years now, would make a terrific, big-budget science-fiction character. The Question would make a great modestly budgeted TV show, in that you could shoot on existing sets or on easily obtainable locations, and not have to worry much about special effects."

But Dennis O'Neil and Tom de Falco have learned to ride with the whims of other media. As de Falco puts it, "I'm always fascinated to see what other people do with our characters. Sometimes my fascination is rewarded with pleasure, sometimes it's horror. So you always keep your figures crossed."

SEAN YOUNG: THE CAT'S PAJAMAS!

By TERRI HARDIN

Sean Young, the beautiful, but erratic actress who has lately distinguished herself as a real-life caped crusader, will finally get her wish to be a Catwoman. Only it won't be beside Michael Keaton, or even have anything to do with Batman: Young has agreed with Motion Picture Corporation of America to play the Black Cat, a Catwoman-like character culled from the pages of comic books.

Young was originally chosen to play Vicki Vale in 1989's blockbuster hit *Batman*, but was injured when she fell from a horse. She was replaced by Kim Basinger, who rendered the Vale role well, but rendered it nonexistent in *Batman Returns* by demanding more money than anyone cared to pay.

© 1989 Lorne-Harvey Productions, art by Al Gabriele.

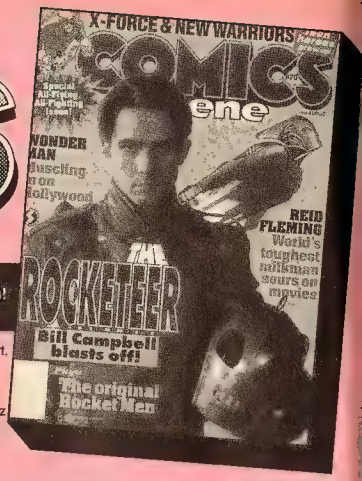
Imagine Sean Young in this dilemma....ummmm, SMELL the box office!

When the role of Catwoman in *Batman Returns* became available (due to Annette Bening's pregnancy), Young smarted at not being included in the pool of prospective feline talent. She decided, for reasons of her own, that the snub could be countered by flamboyant behavior, and came on like gangbusters, appearing in public in a Catwoman-like suit.

Unfortunately for her caped crusade, director Tim Burton was having none of it. When she was denied access to Burton, Young went on *The Joan Rivers Show*, cape and all, and lambasted Burton in public.

The role eventually went to Michelle Pfeiffer, whose slinky perfect handling of it can now be seen on

ON THE COMICS scene



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movie screens throughout the country. When she heard that Pfeiffer was to be Catwoman, Young was at first enraged, then resigned. Her only criticism was the odd remark that seemed to imply Pfeiffer might give the character too much depth. "She'd be right for Batgirl," Young said, "but not for Catwoman. I mean, Catwoman with a heart is what it becomes."

All the Catmania took a terrible toll on everyone—especially Young. After all, a supermarket tabloid could devote itself exclusively to scandals and fracas surrounding her name. For starters, Young's antics have apparently alienated some of the biggest men in Hollywood: Kevin Costner (who refuses to speak to her after they starred together in *No Way Out*), Tim Burton, and Warren Beatty. (Challenging Beatty's style on the set of *Dick Tracy*, she was soon replaced by Glenne Headly, who played the saccharine Tess Trueheart in a distinctly idiosyncratic fashion.) Hollywood being what it is, all would be forgiven (as was often the case with that other tempermental star—Marilyn Monroe) if only Young's name on a movie could rake in the bucks. Unfortunately, it doesn't; and Young has gone on to star in a number of catastrophic bombs. *A Kiss Before Dying*, a re-working

© 1991 Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc.

A recurring villain in the Black Cat's world is (obviously) The Sceptre, shown here teaching our slinky heroine that life is a gas!

© 1988 Lorne-Harvey Productions, art by Murphy Anderson.

The pitch pussycat draws taught her bow before releasing the piercing arrow!

© 1990 Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc, art by Lee Elias.

In her secret identity, the Black Cat is a glamorous Hollywood actress!

© 1992 Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc.

In this sordid expose, Santa Claus is revealed as a foot fetishist and leather freak.

© 1982 Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc., art by Ken Selig.

of the old Ira Levin story, failed to ignite the screen; and *Love Crimes* (with Patrick Bergin), a strange concoction of sexual obsession that was beleaguered by plot and other problems, died a swift death, in spite of Young's endless plugging in interviews.

The Black Cat is a real swinger—especially when she swings into action!

© 1991 Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc., art by Al Gabriele.

© 1991 Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc, art by Lee Elias.

Young is hardly the monster she's been painted. At 32, she is lithesomely attractive, beaming the benefits of yoga, dance, and good diet. She lives on her ranch in Sedona, Arizona, with her husband Robert Lujan, whom she met on the set of the mini-series *Blood and Orchids* (which paired her with Kris Kristofferson) in 1985. She is passionate about dance (sitting on the board of the American Tap Orchestra), animals, and—of all things—*Star Trek* (Young is scheduled to appear on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*). It is her misfortune, however, that she speaks her mind without the Hollywood muscle to back it up.

But now Young has the part she's been searching for. Having done *The Sketch Artist* (which recently appeared on Showtime) with Jeff Fahey and Drew Barrymore, Young has formed a bond with the production company Motion Picture Corporation of America. MPCA, according to one of its producers, Chad Oman, has been looking for properties which have strong female leads. In its search, MPCA has come across the Black Cat.

Like Batman, the Black Cat hales from comic books. The story of the Black Cat, created by Harvey Publications, is of a woman who comes to Los Angeles and becomes a stuntwoman for a movie studio. Disturbed by crime around her, she turns to crimefighting by night, clothing her rather voluptuous figure in the costume of a slinky cat. Unlike Batman, however, the Black Cat character barely survived the '40s; and in 1951, Harvey Publications discontinued the character but kept the title, *Black Cat Mystery*, around for a horror comic. The success of *Batman* apparently breathed life into the Black Cat once more, and collections of the character's exploits are now available.

MPCA has just finished development of the screenplay, and is putting together the cast and crew so the movie should be ready sometime next year. "We'll be updating the concept," says Oman. "She'll be an actress/stuntwoman by day, and a crimefighter by night."

Young was very interested in the role of the Black Cat. An industry insider has said, "She really wants to be Catwoman." Oman agrees, "She's wanted to do a role similar to Catwoman for a while." But will the Black Cat be Young's big-time comeback? Will she show the world (and Hollywood) she's got what it takes to be a mega-star? At this point, remarks to the contrary would just be catty.

This formidable feline stomps Nazi scum in the North African theater!

© 1991 Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc., art by Pelletier.

No noose is good noose, as far as The Black Cat is concerned.

© 1991 Lorne-Harvey Publications, Inc. art by Lee Elias.

RECOLLECTIONS

Are the Dynamic Duo bitter?

ADAM WEST & BURT WARD TAKE A LOOK AT BATMAN RETURNS!

"I don't know why they're trying to kill me," ponders Adam West. No, he's not on the run from the mob. The "they" the actor West refers to are Time-Warner (owners of the Batman trademark and all related indicia). And the "me" he refers to is—who else?—Batman.

But we're talking about the 1966 Batman here. You know—the lavender tights, POW! BAM! ZONK! ZOWIE!, "Yes, Commissioner" Batman. The Adam West Batman. A far cry from the black, brooding, violent avenger played by Michael Keaton on the silver screen in *Batman* (1989) and *Batman Returns* (1992), West's small screen Batman was at once whimsical, colorful, even comical. West wore the trademark cape and cowl in ABC-TV's campy, op art classic *Batman* from 1966 to '68.

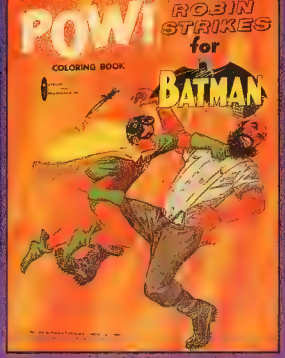
Philosophical disparities aside, West believes both his and Michael Keaton's Batmen can indeed coexist in harmony without driving the public to panic and confusion. Says West: "(Time-Warner's) memoed attitude or directive is 'We don't want to confuse the audience.' What? Michael Keaton's got a plastic, rubber muscle suit he runs around in. I've got these funny tights on. Nobody's going to get us mixed up.

"The merchandising that's really moving is not that dark, sinister sort of voodoo doll that you should stick pins in and make chants with. It's our lighter, brighter, more familiar Batman. I think it's more accessible to kids and other people."

But never fear. If and when Time-Warner finally wises up, West will be poised and ready to bring *his* Batman back to the big screen. "Look," West, a hearty 62, tells COMICS

Burt Ward as Robin (left) looks on as Batman (Adam West) takes a call from Commissioner Gordon on the Batphone.

Ward and West had their likenesses on many products during the Batmania craze of the 1960s. Here they are on trading cards.



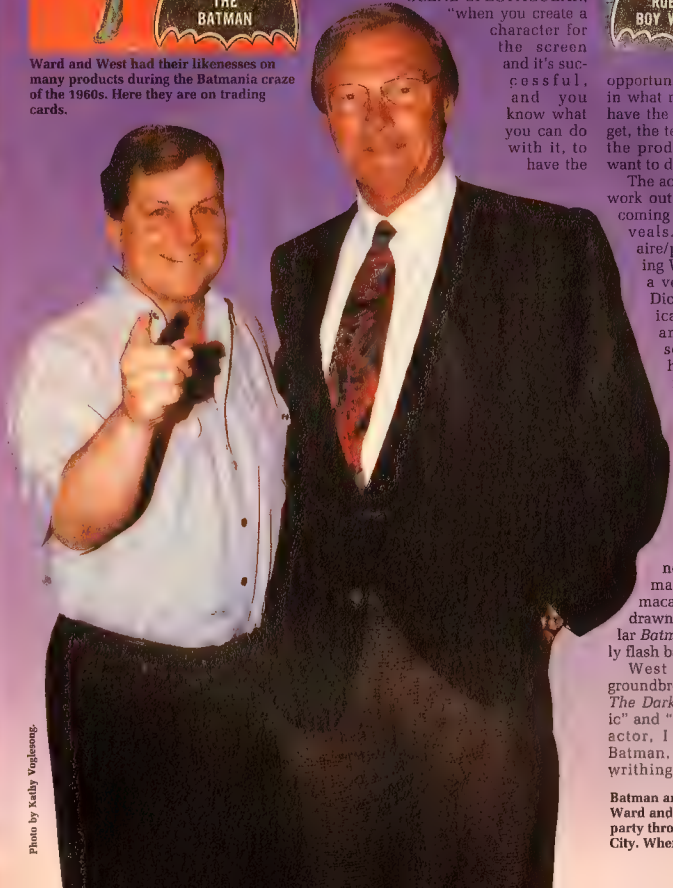
Robin even starred in his own coloring book.

SCENE SPECTACULAR, "when you create a character for the screen and it's successful, and you know what you can do with it, to have the opportunity to do it for the big screen in what might be a definitive way, to have the production design, the budget, the technology, the great talent in the production around you...sure I want to do it."

The actor has even gone so far as to work out a storyline. "I have Batman coming out of retirement," West reveals. "Bruce Wayne, millionaire/philanthropist, is now heading Wayne Industries. You know, a very busy guy. And Robin—Dick Grayson—is off as a medical intern, playing his guitar and chasing nurses. Well, something happens and we have to come out of retirement. And like 'Rocky,' we have to get back in shape."

As a child, West read *Batman* comic books and later drew on "sense memories" to help get a beat on his portrayal of the Caped Crusader. "It's really amazing," the actor says. "To this day, if I pick up a *Batman* comic book—not so much the new graphic magazines that are so gothic, macabre, sinister and beautifully drawn—but when I pick up a regular *Batman* comic book, I immediately flash back. I go back to that."

West refers to Frank Miller's groundbreaking Batman graphic novel *The Dark Knight Returns* as "dramatic" and "wonderfully executed. As an actor, I would love to play that Batman, the demons of alcoholism writhing through his guts. Or even



Batman and Robin themselves—Burt Ward and Adam West—at a "high rollers" party thrown by the Donald in Atlantic City. Where's Marla?

Photo by Kathy Vogtsong.

© 1966, ABC-TV

© 1966 National Periodical Publications, Inc.

© 1966 National Periodical Publications

Batman and Robin were joined by Batgirl (Yvonne Craig) by 1968.

© 1968, ABC-TV

Photo by Kathy Vogtlesang

The Batmobile, which twice put Ward in the hospital while filming the very first episode.

Commissioner Gordon, stumbling through the city. That's the kind of stuff an actor wants to get his teeth into. I've done a lot of serious roles too, and would liked to have done that Batman. But that's a whole different Batman—and it's a different kind of arena, isn't it?"

West's co-star in the '60s *Batman* TV series was Burt Ward, now 47, who played the trusty, holyism-spouting Robin the Boy Wonder. Like West, Ward also read comic books as a child and later brought some of those early memories into his portrayal. "Mostly *Superman* and *Superboy*, which I read as well," Ward tells CSS. "I did go back a little when I was doing the series, and kind of looked again and researched. I took another look at the characters."

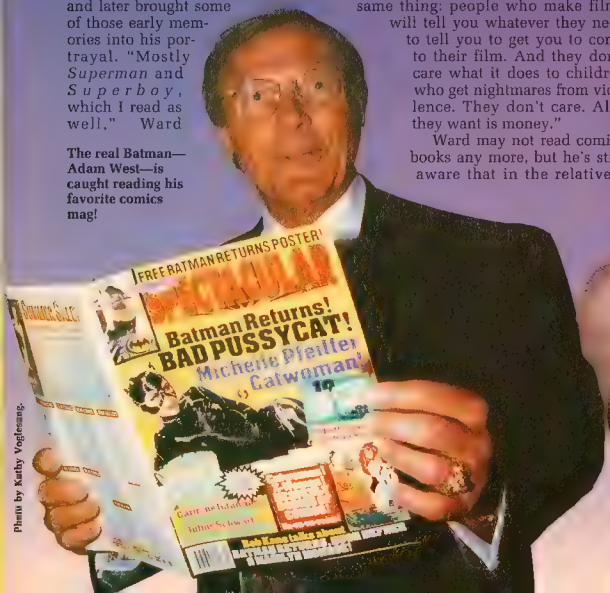
Ward's take on the modern Batman films? "Although they spent a ton of money on the great sets and everything, they really focus on the negative," he laments. "They focus on the 'Dark Knight,' making Batman just as much a killer as the Joker. And the sad thing about this is that they really promote is as a children's film.

"The first film was well done, and certainly Jack Nicholson was brilliant. But it wasn't a children's film. It wasn't *Bambi*. It was a misrepresentation. And it all goes back to the same thing: people who make films will tell you whatever they need to tell you to get you to come to their film. And they don't care what it does to children who get nightmares from violence. They don't care. All they want is money."

Ward may not read comic books any more, but he's still aware that in the relatively current DC titles, Dick Grayson—the original Robin—has struck out on his own and renamed himself Nightwing. "Oh, I've know that for years," he says. "I know that there was a big thing in the comics when there was a new Robin. CNN was trying to get me on the air to talk about it. I didn't want to do that, because it wasn't the same Robin. It was just a publicity hoax to sell more comic books."

And how does Ward come by all of this comic trivia? "Let me tell you," he laughs. "When you make a public appearance—*believe* me—people will come up and tell you the color of your shoes or the belt that you wore...I mean, they'll tell you everything!"

—*Mark Voger*



The real Batman—Adam West—is caught reading his favorite comics mag!

Photo by Kathy Vogtlesang.

Holy flashback! It's Burt Ward, striking a Robinesque pose for the readers of CSS!

Photo by Kathy Vogtlesang.

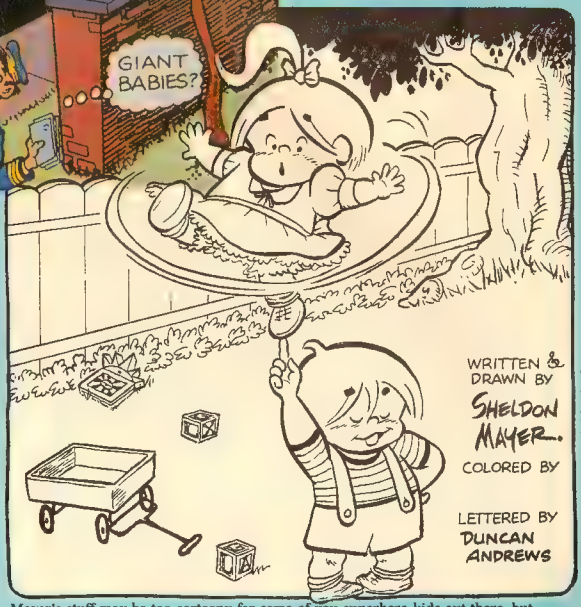
In Memoriam:

He discovered Superman, and defended Wonder Woman's Maidenly Honor.

SHELDON MAYER

By TERRI HARDIN

Sheldon Mayer's version of "Honey, I Blew Up the Kids."



All art by Sheldon Mayer, © DC Comics, Inc.

Mayer's stuff may be too cartoony for some of you superhero kids out there, but remember: He revolutionized the comic-book world by discovering Superman!

When Sheldon Mayer died on December 21, 1991, at the age of 74, it signalled the end of an era. Mayer was present at the birth of Comicdom. His first employer was the legendary innovator-deadbeat, Major Wheeler-Nicolson, the man who invented the comic-book proper; from there, Mayer went to McClure Syndicate, which handled newspaper comic strips. It was there that he revolutionized the comic-book world by discovering Superman.

According to fellow colleague Bob Kane, "Nobody wanted it. They [Jerry Siegel and Joel Shuster] brought it around and they were rejected by every publisher and every newspaper syndicate at that time, but somehow they brought it to Sheldon.

"Sheldon was with McClure Syndicate, and he left to go to Detective Comics [DC]. He brought the strips along, and Harry Donenfeld didn't know what to do with them. He said, 'We'll give it a shot anyway.' So they cut them up and they turned them into a comic book, and the first issue in 1938 was a sell-out."

Mayer continued at DC, editing various comic books and strips. One of his greatest challenges as an editor came in the form of William Moulton Marston, the creator of *Wonder Woman*. Marston had a penchant for placing phallic imagery in his panels, which Mayer felt obliged to remove. Sometimes, however, Marston was able to sneak his phalloids past the less sophisticated Mayer—which made for a somewhat titillating and kinky read. In Mayer's own words: "I don't know whether his tricks did it, or my ability to squelch them did it, but it [*Wonder Woman*] did become a great success."

Of his own work, Mayer is principally known for his *Scribbly* comic strip and *Sugar and Spike* (which Mayer successfully positioned to rival the popularity of *Dennis the Menace*). While this innocent fare is often passed over for stronger stuff, no one should forget that all the costumed superheroes that grace comic-book covers today owe their existence to Sheldon Mayer.

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THE TRADING IS HOT
X-CARDS

The X-Factor consist of team-leader Havok, Polaris, Multiple Man, Wolfsbane, Strong Guy, and U.S. Government liason Val Cooper.

Quicksilver (aka Pietro Maximoff). The long-time Avenger is now affiliated with X-Factor. He made his debut in the Marvel Universe in *Uncanny X-Men* #4.

Will they replace Wall Street?

The new trading cards of Marvel mutants are being purchased, traded and re-sold with such fervor that they are starting to be considered a commodity comparable to a precious metal by investors. Will these cards replace stocks and bonds?

X-CARDS

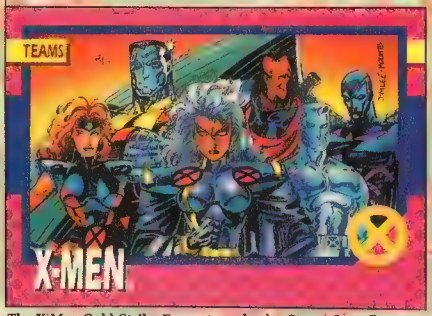
On sub-basement level number two of the X-Mansion is the Danger Room, where mutants hone their skills with constant training. Here we see Nightcrawler during a workout.

Professor X (aka Charles Xavier) is the founder of the X-Men and is reputed to be the most powerful telepath on Earth.

Villain Black Tom Cassidy has allied himself with Juggernaut. Together the pair have pledged to annihilate the X-Men.

Wolverine (aka Logan) is affiliated with X-Men Blue Strike Force. With his untamed savagery, Wolverine is one of the most dangerous men alive.

How do you defeat Shiva? He cannot die. Each time his body is destroyed, his programming allows for successful regeneration.



The X-Men Gold Strike Force: team leader Storm, Jean Grey, Colossus, Iceman, Bishop and Archangel.

Juggernaut (aka Cain Marko) is the evil step-brother of Professor X.

Gideon is a truly dangerous man. He is a mutant with good business sense. He is capable of duplicating the powers of his mutant foes, while being rich enough to buy most of North America.

TM & © 1992 DC Comics Inc., courtesy Warner Bros.

CATWOMAN!

Anderson, Andru, Esposito, Fradon, Gil Kane, Kubert, Oksner, Schaffenberger, Boltinoff!

DC'S SILVER AGE FRONT LINE!

Whew! You can't get much more sixties than this: A house ad for DC's "Go-Go Checks."

Draggin'? Complainin'? You need entertainin'!!! So spake a house ad which appeared in DC comic books during the Silver Age (1956-69), when men were men (even though they wore tights), and superheroes still smiled—and *not* because they just put a villain in the intensive care ward. A DC comic book from the Silver Age is a four-color wonderland of excitement and innocence that survives as a kind of a print media time capsule from a bygone era.

Just check out the ads. Ketsugo made easy. The winking monster eye. X-Ray Specs. Onion Gum. Free admission to Palisades Amusement Park in New Jersey (gee, did people in Iowa bum out when they saw these?). Model kit ads from Aurora, Monogram and AMT (both Herman and Grampa Munster cameoed in AMT ads). Freakiest of all was that Polaris Nuclear Sub. Was it really nuclear? Did it really fire rockets and torpedoes, as the ad claimed? If so, why was it only $6.98?

And don't forget the public service ads, which nowadays tend to inspire chortles. "Smoking is For Squares." "Lost—a Free Education." "What's Your B.Q.(Brotherhood Quotient)?" "The Policeman is Your Friend." "Wanted: Safe Bus Riders." Come to think of it, they should reprint the whole bunch—this was good advice!

But most important of all...was the artwork.

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SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS
Every DC Comic is Approved by the Comics Code Authority
© 1962 DC Comics, Inc.

A general house ad for DC Comics highlights superheroes and "funny" book titles. Featured are Gil Kane's *Green Lantern*, Ramona Fradon's *Aquaman*, Bob Oksner's *Bob Hope* and *Jerry Lewis*, and others.

BE MY GUEST
AT AMERICAS GREATEST AMUSEMENT PARK
PALISADES
AMUSEMENT PARK N.J.
½ MILE SOUTH OF GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE
LOOK FOR THIS COUPON IN ALL DC MAY THROUGH OCTOBER ISSUES
ADMIT ONE (1) Lo
PALISADES
AMUSEMENT PARK, N.J.
GOOD HOLIDAYS and FRIDAYS (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS) Until 6 P.M.
FREE ADMISSION CIRCUS ACTS PARKING
WORTH 80¢
FREE RIDE ANSCO SPACE ROCKET
FREE RIDE CRAZY CRYSTALS

The oft-reprinted Palisades Amusement ad showing Superman holding the park aloft. Like the Silver Age, during which this ad was a staple, the park no longer exists.

A house ad for DC Comics highlights four then-new superhero titles. Featured are Gil Kane's *Atom*, Murphy Anderson's *Hawkman*, Ramona Fradon's *Aquaman* and Ross Andru's *Metal Men*.

Last issue, we spoke with the Fathers of the Silver Age—five comic book veterans responsible for *Showcase #4* and *Fantastic Four #1* (two books that ushered in a new age in comics). This issue, we're going to delve a little deeper into the era. We now present DC's Silver Age Front Line—interviews with eight of the greatest artists to draw for DC during that wonderful era. Meet Murphy Anderson, Ross Andru, Henry Boltinoff, Ramona Fradon, Gil Kane, Joe Kubert, Bob Oksner and Kurt Schaffenberger. If you read, collect or just remember DC's Silver Age comic books, then you've thrilled to the artwork of DC's Silver Age Front Line.

MURPHY ANDERSON

His strong faces, "vintage" look, distinctive inking, clean layouts and apparent love for costumed heroes all combined to make Murphy Anderson's Silver Age work some of that era's most memorable. As a penciller, Anderson demonstrated his affinity for the capes-and-robbers genre in *Hawkman*, *Spectre*, *Strange Adventures* and in certain outstanding *Showcase* and *The Brave and the Bold* tryout titles. As an inker, Anderson was utilized shrewdly by editor Julius Schwartz, reserved for DC's most high-profile assignments (such as covers for *Justice League of America* and *Detective*). Schwartz knew what he was getting with Anderson's inks: solid, super stuff.

Born in Asheville, NC in 1926, Anderson studied at the Art Students League and landed his first job in the comics biz pencilling *Star Pirate* for Fiction House at age 18. In 1947, the 21-year-old Anderson landed the one assignment that he still calls his career highlight: the syndicated *Buck Rogers* newspaper strip, which he inherited from Dick Calkins.

He first landed at National (later DC) in 1950, working chiefly for Schwartz, the editor responsible for reviving most of DC's Golden Age characters and revamping them in the Silver Age. "Julie had always wanted to revive the Justice (Society) and the Flash and characters that he had a great liking for," Anderson tells COMICS SCENE SPECTACULAR. "When it seemed to succeed, he was given the green light to experiment more. Some other editors may have wanted to try. Julie was successful. He had the edge on the other editors."

Though Schwartz counted on Anderson for a lot of inking back then, Anderson got to draw two regular assignments: the Atomic Knights ("It was in every third issue of *Strange Adventures*") and the winged avenger *Hawkman*: "I enjoyed drawing *Hawkman* very much," Anderson says. "I was trying to fill pretty big shoes in following Joe (Kubert). I don't know how well it sold, but I protested so much about doing nothing but inking that Julie had to shut me up by giving me a regular feature."

Photo by Kathy Voglesong

Murphy Anderson, today: doin' the convention thing.

In 1965, Anderson pencilled and inked the first in a series of tryout titles that revived some lesser known superheroes from the Golden Age. Unlike the Flash, Green Lantern, et al, these particular heroes were presented as the originals—no new origins, costumes or secret identities. Editor Schwartz, writer Gardner Fox and artist Anderson formed a triumvirate on eight books that revived a total of seven Golden Age heroes; the books emerge today as great, overlooked treasures of the Silver Age.

The first two of the series were *The Brave and the Bold* #55 and 56, featuring Dr. Fate and Hourman (billed as "the Super-Team Supreme"). *B&B* #55 featured a guest appearance by *Green Lantern*, but true to the series' form, he was Alan Scott—the Golden Age Green Lantern. This was, in fact, Alan Scott's very first Silver Age appearance (more would follow in the regular Green Lantern title). Later that year, Schwartz, Fox and Anderson made a second attempt in this vein with *B&B* #61, featuring Starman and Black Canary ("guest star" Wildcat joined them in #62).

What was the strategy behind these tryouts? "Julie wanted to revive them," Anderson recalls, "and he thought rather than doing them singly, he could do two or three at a time. I was chosen because Julie knew my love for that period. Since I had a lot of my old comic books, it was easy for me to go back and reference them. I used a lot of my own personal books for references on those tryouts. It was just fun for me, and he knew that. I didn't try to copy the other guy's style, but I did try to get the feel of the character, and keep the costume accurate."

In 1966, one more Golden Age hero would be resurrected by the trio. But this time, the hero would cross over into his own title. *Showcase* #60 featured the first Silver Age appearance of the Spectre. After two more tryouts in *Showcase*, the Spectre was given his own title, which lasted for 10 issues. Anderson pencilled and inked *Spectre* #1, and inked four of the last five issues.

Today, Anderson keeps busy in print media with his color separation business and convention appearances. "I'm just happy that anybody remembers my stuff at all," says humble Murphy Anderson with a laugh. He is assured that they do...and will.

© 1966 DC Comics, Inc.

This Joe Kubert-pencilled, Murphy Anderson-inked panel from *Atom and Hawkman* #40 shows a blend of both artists' styles.

ROSS ANDRU

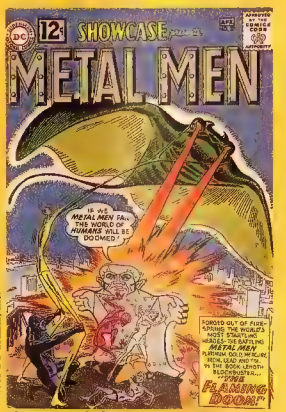
Have you ever wondered how man's subconscious desire to fly relates to a comic book fan's fascination with airborn superheroes? Ross Andru—one superhero artist who is renowned for putting breath-taking aerial "shots" into the pages he draws—has a theory on that. And he'd be just the guy to ask, wouldn't he?

"A certain percentage of people dreamt of flying when they were children," Andru says. "I know I did. And in my dreams, I used to fly a great deal. Eventually I reached a point where—after seeing a lot of horror films—one of them would suddenly enter my dream. Whenever I was in danger, I would escape by flapping my arms and flying away. As I got older, I became more logical, and as I became more logical in my dreams, I was less able to fly. Originally, I could fly way up in the sky and look down over a huge landscape. Later on, I couldn't. I wonder how many people who were attracted to the superhero and Superman really flew in their dreams as children?"

Philosophical stuff from Ross Andru, 64, who studied under *Tarzan* artist Burne Hogarth (and once ghosted on his Sunday page), pencilled *Joe Yank* in the '50s, and throughout the '60s was one of DC's Silver Age Front Line, pencilling *The Flash*, *The Brave and the Bold*, *World's Finest* and *Star Spangled War Stories*, always with inks by longtime collaborator Mike Esposito. Throughout the Silver Age, though, the two titles most associated with

the Andru-Esposito signature were *Wonder Woman* and *Metal Men*.

The *Wonder Woman* envisioned and realized by Ross Andru—quite different from that of his predecessor, H.G. Peters—was able to retain a cartoonish humor, despite Andru's strict adherence to proportion and perspective. Andru's Paradise Island was a carefree, innocent place, a comic book Camelot in a less-complicated era. A new cast of characters—ordered by editor/writer Robert Kanigher via his scripts—sprang from Andru's pencil. Lithe, inquisitive Wonder Girl with her bouncing ponytail and blossoming body. Wide-eyed, precocious Wonder Tot with her chubby cheeks and squat little arms and legs. Freakish Mer Man and Bird Man (rivals for Wonder Woman's affection) and their younger counterparts Mer Boy and Bird Boy, (who pursued Wonder Girl). Offbeat villains like the Boiling Man, the Crimson Centipede and the Humpty Dumpty-like menace, Egg Fu.



© 1962 DC Comics, Inc.

This cover of *Showcase* #37 was pencilled by Ross Andru and inked by Mike Esposito. This issue contained the first-ever appearance of the Metal Men.

Along with *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*, *Wonder Woman* was one Silver Age title that appealed to as many girls as boys. But Wonder Woman and Wonder Girl were shapely females who showed a lot of leg—a bonus that certainly wasn't lost on the adolescent male of the day. "I thought of them as Miss America posing," Andru laughs. "There was an innocence to it—I don't recall being intentionally salacious. This was before the women's movement, and 'cheesecake' was considered valid. If people could wear bathing suits, they could wear superhero clothing."

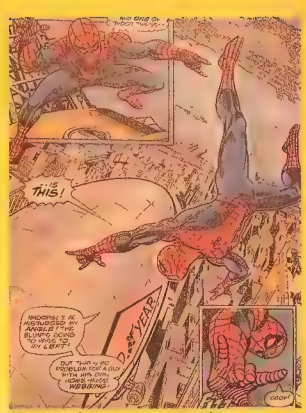
Andru and Esposito drew *Wonder Woman* for a healthy run that lasted nearly a decade, though from issue #156 to #164 (1965-66) the pair was forced to emulate Peters' style in stories presented with the slogan "Comics' golden age returns more dazzling than ever!" These books are considered the lowest ebb of Andru and Esposito's otherwise irreproachable run with the title. "We didn't make that decision, of course," Andru says. "The company and Bob did. That was the era, if I'm not mistaken, that coincides with the resurgence of Batman on TV. The thought was that maybe we could help *Wonder Woman*'s sales by going back to a nostalgia look, sort of become campy. In those days, they didn't dare take comics seriously."

Most of the characters Andru has drawn over the years—Wonder Woman, Superman, Spider-Man—were originally designed by other artists. But one set of super characters Andru himself initially designed was a team of shape-shifting robots with human personalities created by Kanigher: the Metal Men. Gold, Tina, Mercury, Tin, Iron, Lead and sometimes "Nameless" (Tin's girlfriend) comprised the unique band, which debuted in *Showcase* #37 in 1962. It was Ross Andru who fleshed out Kanigher's character concepts.

"First of all, I decided to come up with a common costume for all of them," Andru says, "and then modify it according to their bodies and temperament. In those days we always put a symbol on each superhero's chest, so I followed through and took the symbols that Bob suggested, which were the actual symbols for the metals. Then I thought about the different characteristics of each metal. It was sort of like taking different racial characteristics—and the metals have their racial characteristics, in a sense—and translating them to the character of the metal itself."

It was during his run on *Wonder Woman* and *Metal Men* that Andru perfected his penchant for the "overhead" shot. Andru often drew scenes from a bird's-eye perspective, peering down from miles above into Paradise Island or Doc Magnus' laboratory complex. "Truthfully, those vantage points were suggested to me by Bob," Andru says. "He would say, 'Start the sequence with Wonder Woman flying above Paradise Island.' He wouldn't tell me the exact vantage point to take, but he would evoke the mood of a scene, a vantage point which was fairly broad, so I could take my own 'shot.'

"I was becoming more and more design conscious, in terms of positive and negative space and the geometric overlap of shapes. When you're in the sky, it's much easier to create a series of planes looking down than it is to look up—or it was for me."



© 1976 DC Comics Inc./Marvel Comics.

This page from *Superman vs. the Amazing Spider-Man* shows Ross Andru's penchant for breathtaking aeriel POV.

In the early '70s, Andru and Esposito defected to Marvel, where Andru was forced to master a whole new style of writing and drawing—the Marvel style. "That was my first introduction to Stan [Lee], and to the Marvel style of writing," Andru remembers. "I had never worked that way before. I was amazed. You see this very tall, cool gentleman. You know, a businessman. He's got a lot of class about him. He's relaxed. He's talking through the story, and all of a sudden, the guy gets animated. At one point, he jumps up on the desk! He's living out a part of the story!

"I was completely floored. I was so busy watching Stan acting out these scenes that...I just never expected to see this guy, this top editor, so caught up in a story conference!"

By 1976, Andru was so established as a Marvel artist that he became the logical choice to pencil the first-ever DC/Marvel crossover project, *Superman vs. the Amazing Spider-Man*. Recently, Andru has been reunited with longtime collaborator Esposito on *Fear Itself*, Marvel's long-awaited Spider-Man graphic novel (initially scripted by Conway, but completed by Lee), and *Zen Intergalactic Ninja*, Archie's new three-part series based on the environmentally-correct character created by Steve Stern and Dan Cote. Hey...with fresh Andru-Esposito product on the stands vying for your comic book dollar, the Silver Age lives on!

HENRY BOLTINOFF

See if you remember these DC characters: Jerry the Jitterbug? Varsity Vic? Homer? Cora the Car Hop? Confused because none of them are superheroes? Okay, how about Super Turtle?

If you've read a DC comic book from the Silver Age, chances are you've seen the work of cartoonist Henry Boltinoff, who supplied full- and half-page filler gags featuring the above-mentioned troupe of rotating characters for just about every DC title. Boltinoff's light-hearted cartoons were the sorbet that cleansed the pallet between pages of exciting superhero action. His 30 years with DC culminated in the strip many Silver Age fans remember best: *Cap's Hobby Hints*.

Model building was one of the biggest crazes of the craze-happy 1960s (right up there with monsters, trading cards and Batman). Pick up any mid-to-late '60s DC book, and you'll find several ads by Aurora, AMT, Monogram, etc. To tap into the craze, DC had Boltinoff create Cap, the kindly proprietor of a neighborhood hobby shop. In each installment, Cap would dispense model-building tips sent in by readers from all over the country. Sage gems like: By cutting a circle of clear plastic and glueing it to the nose of a model plane, you can simulate a propeller in motion! Or: You can peel off erroneously-affixed decals safely with transparent tape! Or: The stream of air from an empty hairspray canister can dry enamel paint faster!

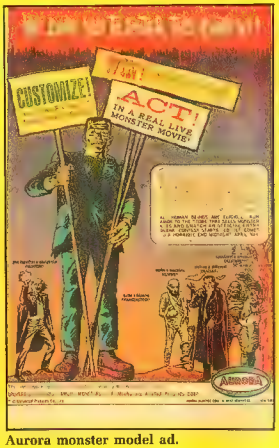
This was the kind of advice a kid could not live without during the Silver Age. New York City-born Henry Boltinoff—who has never built a model kit in his 78 years—spoke with COMICS SCENE SPECTACULAR via phone from his Florida home.

CSS: How did you put *Cap's Hobby Hints* together?

BOLTINOFF: The readers sent in ideas. I used to get 200 a week. Then I'd go through them and see what was good, and I'd bring them into the editor. We'd pick out what we wanted.

CSS: How was the strip born?

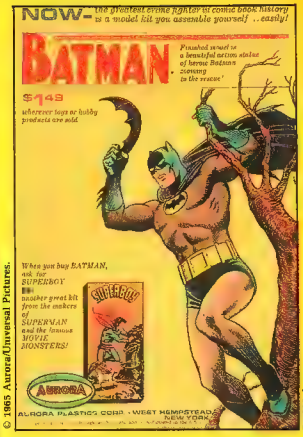
BOLTINOFF: Irwin Donenfeld at that time was head of the company. He did it the hard way—his father started the company with Jack Liebowitz. So Irwin became the president. And it was his idea to try it, because they had a lot of advertising from the different model companies. So he thought it would be a good idea to run a thing like that. And it was a good idea. You can always tell by the mail that comes in.



Aurora monster model ad.

CSS: Now, you also drew *Shorty, SuperTurtle, Peg, Ollie...*

BOLTINOFF: *Jerry the Jitterbug. Private Pete.* I'm trying to go back. Who remembers some of these things?


NOW—
BATMAN
$1.49
wherever toys or hobby products are sold.
When you buy BATMAN, ask for SUPERBOY
another great kit from the makers of SUPERMAN and the famous MOVIE MONSTERS!
SUPERBOY
AURORA
ALROARA PLASTICS CORP. • WEST HEMPSTEAD • NEW YORK
© 1965 Aurora/Universal Pictures.
© 1966 Aurora.

Batman hobby kit ad.

When I was doing the comic book work, that wasn't my sole income. I did freelance magazine work with the *Saturday Evening Post, Collier's* and *Look. Ladies Home Journal.* And all the gag magazines. I started in comics because I was getting married and I knew Whit Ellsworth. He was an editor at that time up at DC. And all of a sudden I had to pay rent, electric, telephone bill. I said, 'How about some work?' He said, 'Alright, start doing some filler pages.' No one ever used filler pages before. Because, at that time, the books were 64 pages with no advertising. So they had plenty of space to fill. So I started to do that, and I was with DC for more than 30-some-odd years.

I haven't done the comic book stuff for years. Now I'm happy doing something called *Hocus Focus.* A puzzle type of page. I do a whole week's worth in about two days. That's all I want to do. I'm in Florida. I play tennis four times a week. I want to take it easy.

As a matter of fact, I just got a book last year—DC Comics put out a hardcover book on the '50s. Here, I'll just read you the title (shuffling noise in background). Here it is. A hardcover book called *The Greatest 1950s Stories Ever Told.* You'd think it was something from the Bible! And it's all the reprints of comics from DC Comics. A hardcover book. Sells for $29. I don't know who buys it. I didn't know anything about it. I got a check in the mail. Two of my things appeared in there. A *Private Pete* and a *Casey the Cop.* The reprint check was very nice. I got paid much more for the reprint than I got for the original artwork 40 years ago!

A quintessential example of Henry Boltinoff's *Cap's Hobby Hints* strip, which imparted valuable hobby-kit building tips during the Silver Age.

CAP'S HOBBY HINTS
KIDS! MAIL IN YOUR HOBBY HINTS TO... CAP'S, NATIONAL COMICS, 575 LEXINGTON AVE. NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022
IF PUBLISHED, YOU WILL RECEIVE $5 AND THE ORIGINAL ART.
I JUST BROKE THE PROPELLER BLADE ON MY PLANE.
I'LL SHOW YOU A COOL WAY TO FIX THAT.
WE'LL TAKE THIS CLEAR PIECE OF PLASTIC FROM THE TOP OF THIS OLD BOX, AND CUT OUT A CIRCLE, THE DIAMETER OF THE PROPELLER.
THANKS TO - JOHN ABELSON NEW HAVEN, CONN.
THEN, I REMOVE THE NOSE CONE, AND GLUE THE PLASTIC IN THE CENTER, WHERE THE PROPELLER SHAFT WAS. NOW, I REPLACE THE CONE.
NOSE CONE
WOW! IT'S BETTER THAN BEFORE. IT LOOKS LIKE A SPINNING PROPELLER!
© 1967 DC Comics, Inc.

RAMONA FRADON

Oddball characters? There was no shortage of oddball characters that sprang forth from the pages of DC comic books during the Silver Age. Bat-Mite! Wonder Tot! Bizarro #1! The Blimp! Dumb Bunny! Mr. Mxyzptlk! But not many of them were odder than old Rexy boy himself, Metamorpho the Element Man.

A reluctant superhero (he'd rather be "normal," but his boss/nemesis delights in exploiting his freakish state), Metamorpho is made up of all elements, and can transform himself into any solid, liquid or gas at the drop of a beaker. But he's also a joker, a hipster, a rogue and a lover. He wears a mask—a "human" mask that camouflages his ugly, elemental mug—whenever he takes on the latter role.

The artist who designed this most unusual and original of characters is an original herself. Until Ramona Fradon came along in the '50s—and for many years thereafter—women just didn't draw costumed superheroes. But along came Fradon, whose lighthearted, sometimes-cartoony style provided whimsy to run-of-the-mill superhero fare without violating the albeit strict rules of the genre.

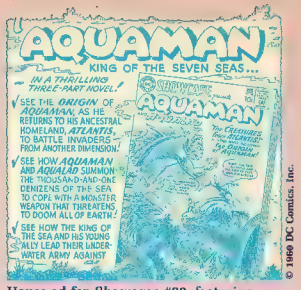
Chicago-born Ramona Fradon, 65, studied at Parson's School of Design and the Art Students League; she originally wanted to be a fine artist. "My first job was at DC," she tells CSS. "I went up and Murray Boltinoff gave me a job drawing *Shining Knight*. I did a couple of those. They soon put me on *Aquaman*. I did maybe a western or two and maybe a detective story, but then they put me on Aquaman on a regular basis."

Fradon drew Aquaman stories that appeared in *Adventure* (alongside Superboy and Green Arrow) in the late '50s and early '60s, years before the Legion of Superheroes would dominate that title. In 1961, Fradon drew Aquaman in *Showcase* #30-33, which led to his solo title. Fradon's Aquaman was classically heroic with a hint of cartoonyness, and her sea creatures were adorable. Vintage stuff, solidly inked by Fradon herself.

In 1965, Fradon designed Metamorpho, one of the most fondly-remembered characters of the 1960s. Hip and humorous, the Element Man debuted in *The Brave and the Bold* #57 and 58. He then won his own title, which enjoyed an 18-issue run (the character has since become a charter member of *Justice League Europe*). Metamorpho was in reality pro adventurer Rex Mason, changed into a shape-shifting freak by the glowing Orb of Ra. Rex was hot for Saphire Stagg, the gorgeous-but-spoiled-rotten daughter of shifty millionaire/genius Simon Stagg (whose assistant—thawed cro-magnon Java—also had a thing for Saphire). Rex's body could change into any element at will, and he used his shape-shifting abilities to fight the forces of evil. The light-hearted title was peppered with "groovy" lingo and lotsa laughs.

"A lot of that had to do with Bob Haney's writing," Fradon says. "We had fun together doing that strip. We took off on each other. Everything he wrote stimulated my imagination, and my drawing stimulated his. It was one of those lucky things. I've never had as much fun as working on that strip."

Looks-wise, Metamorpho was not exactly what you'd call your typical superhero, cursed as he was with a chalk-white bald head, multi-colored-and-textured limbs, and no proper costume. Fradon worked with editor George Kashdan on the Element Man's unorthodox appearance. "He told me this man is made up of different elements," Fradon says, "and he wanted me to somehow illustrate the fact that he was made up of whatever those things were. So I just came up with that, and he just kind of evolved.


AQUAMAN
KING OF THE SEVEN SEAS...
IN A THRILLING THREE-PART NOVEL!
SEE THE ORIGIN OF AQUAMAN, AS HE RETURNS TO HIS ANCESTRAL HOMELAND, ATLANTIS, TO BATTLE INVADERS FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION!
SEE HOW AQUAMAN AND AQUALAD SUMMON THE THOUSAND-AND-ONE DENIZENS OF THE SEA TO COPE WITH A MONSTER WEAPON THAT THREATENS TO DOOM ALL OF EARTH!
SEE HOW THE KING OF THE SEA AND HIS YOUNG ALLY LEAD THEIR UNDERWATER ARMY AGAINST
SHOWCASE
AQUAMAN
© 1960 DC Comics, Inc.

House ad for *Showcase* #30, featuring Ramona Fradon's Aquaman.

"In fact, I think I did some quite different drawings in the beginning. He may have had a cape and been a more standard superhero. As it went on, we just stripped all of that off of him and gave him the symbolic elements in the four parts of his body."

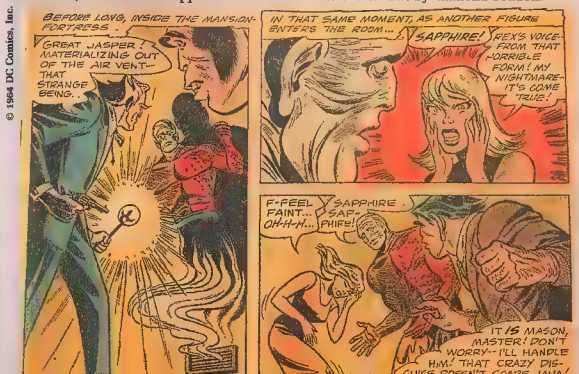
The characters in the *Metamorpho* "cast" were all fully-developed—in art and characterization—from the very first story. "That's Bob's vision, I think," Fradon says. "We were probably all discharging a lot of anger on that strip. Simon Stagg was a dreadful person, and Saphire was quite horrible, really. There was a lot of violence in it, but in a comical kind of way."

But after the two tryouts, Fradon only illustrated the first four issues of the *Metamorpho* title. "I had a baby, and it was just too much," she recalls. "I remember sitting and drawing, and she would be clinging to my knee. I thought, 'This can't go on.' So I retired for a number of years."

Fradon's style was aped by her heirs in the last 14 issues of *Metamorpho*; Joe Orlando and Sal Trapani retained the look and spirit that Fradon established in her six issues. "There are certain times when an artist and a writer can act with a character, and this just happened to be it," Fradon now says. "This was my character, in a very personal kind of a way. A person just can't come along and reproduce that. Metamorpho was me."

Fradon has illustrated the newspaper strip *Brenda Starr* for Tribune Media since 1980. "That's another example," the artist says. "Brenda Starr is Dale (Messick's) character, in the same sense that Metamorpho was my character. It's impossible to follow an act like that and try to copy it. You can't do it, because it's coming out of something very personal."

Rex Mason's friends witness his metamorphosis into Metamorpho in *Brave and Bold* #57, the first-ever appearance of the Element Man. Art by Ramona Fradon.


BEFORE LOVE, INSIDE THE MANSION-FORTRESS...
GREAT JASPER! MATERIALIZING OUT OF THE AIR VENT--THAT STRANGE BEING...
IN THAT SAME MOMENT, AS ANOTHER FIGURE ENTERS THE ROOM...
SAPPHIRE! REX'S VOICE--FROM THAT HORRIBLE FORM! MY NIGHTMARE--IT'S COME TRUE!
F-FEEL FAINT... OH-H-H...
SAPPHIRE
SAP-PHIRE!
IT IS MASON, MASTER! DON'T WORRY--I'LL HANDLE HIM! THAT CRAZY DIS-
© 1964 DC Comics, Inc.

GIL KANE

"That crappy, old stuff" is what Gil Kane calls the artwork he did in DC's *Green Lantern* and *The Atom* during the Silver Age of comics. Can you imagine? Crappy, old stuff?

And yet, the Latvian-born artist, now 66, graciously answered every question CSS asked about said seminal superheroes. Because after all, no examination of DC's Silver Age Front Line would be complete without Gil Kane's input. Though the artist has been trying to live down the Emerald Avenger and the Tiny Titan all these years, he'll just have to pardon us for loving his work from that era.

Born Eli Katz in 1926, Kane began his comic book career at 16 in 1942. Throughout the '40s, he toiled at MLJ, Quality, Fox, Hillman and Fawcett. In 1959 he drew the first follow-up to National's successful Flash feature for editor Julius Schwartz: Green Lantern. The new GL—alias test pilot Hal Jordan—appeared in *Showcase* #22. Two years later, Kane's Atom debuted in *Showcase* #34. Both heroes won their own titles, which Kane illustrated throughout the 1960s.

Kane eventually attained that rare distinction of being strongly identified with both DC and Marvel (the artist points out that he's done over 900 covers for Marvel). But Kane has also established himself outside of the comic book field, with syndicated newspaper strips (*Starhawks*, *Tarzan*, *Prince Valiant*), and a stint as art director for Hanna-Barbera's Saturday morning *Superman* cartoon. He lives in Los Angeles, and is infamous in comic circles for referring to anyone whose name he can't remember as "my boy." Kane spoke with CSS via phone from his California home.

GREEN LANTERN
12¢
SINCE I'M HELPLESS TO BATTLE THE MENACE THREATENING THE EARTH OR THE 58TH CENTURY—I SEND THIS STATUE OF ME TO DO MY FIGHTING!
THE GREEN LANTERN ERECTS A STATUE OF HIMSELF AS GUARDIAN OF THE LIMITS OF STAR CITY 3000 A.D.
© 1963 DC Comics, Inc.

Cover of *Green Lantern* #12, pencilled by Gil Kane.

CSS: The costume you designed for that first *Green Lantern* story in 1959 looks so modern, even today.

KANE: But they didn't follow my suggestions, the inkers and the colorists. Only once or twice in the whole run did my color scheme get used. I wanted green the way they have it, but I wanted blue in the black portion, not grey. They insisted on using grey or light purple on the theory that if they withheld the blue, it gave them the option to use blue as a background color. Which was ridiculous, because Superman, God knows, has blue, red and yellow in his costume. He has all the primaries. And somehow or other, they managed to find colors to use as background for him. And then the inkers didn't understand how I was accenting the costume with a kind of diamond shape, and they always made it look like a sleeveless sweater, which bothered me to no end.

CSS: The costume you designed, of course, is still used to this day. Even in toys. There are Green Lantern action figures in the toy stores...

KANE: I also designed the Adam Strange costume, because I did the first cover on it. I also created the Atom, actually, by myself, because I needed some additional work. The westerns were all dying. I did *Hopalong Cassidy*, I did *Rex the Wonder Dog*, I did a whole string of westerns for them. And they all dropped dead within about two months of each other. At the time, I was already doing *Green Lantern*, but I needed more work. So I submitted an idea for the Atom, made up some presentation sketches, and it was accepted. So I created the Atom, and they assigned Gardner Fox (to write it), and I think John Broome too. John Broome was the writer of the *Green Lantern* material, primarily.

CSS: It seemed that Sid Greene was doing most of your inking on *Green Lantern* and *Atom*. Was he your most comfortable inker?

KANE: Yes, he was, at DC. That was only because I had two terrible inkers: Joe Giella and Bernie Sachs. I had Murphy [Anderson], who wasn't a bad inker, but Murphy would change my work. But when Sid Greene inked it, even though he had a peculiar style, it looked like my penciling. I always wanted to do my own inking. I wasn't as finished as Sid, but at the same time I felt I wanted quality to my work, and he wasn't getting it. Sid had a quality that went against dynamism. He was true to the pencils, but somehow he also filled the panel with a lot of little things. He put bricks in a wall when I would indicate just a couple. He'd fill the entire wall with bricks. He didn't have a strong design sense. I became very, very much involved with design over the years.

CSS: Speaking of design, in comparing an early *Green Lantern* to the stuff you were doing in, say, 1970, one notices a radical change in your layout style. In the early '60s, everything was very clean and straightforward, but a decade later, you were really moving the camera around and doing some bizarre layouts.

KANE: Well, they were so restrictive. You had to hand-letter the copy, which was already on the script. Most of the stuff was for Julie, but some of it was for Bob Kanigher. Kanigher was a little easier, because he didn't have as much copy as Julie. But Julie would do an entire *Green Lantern* story with one punch in the entire story. That was the only panel of violent action. And I would try to extend it and straighten it, but it was so rigid. And, as I said, you had to hand-letter all the word balloons in pencil, and place them in so Julie could read them. Once that new technique started, where you worked from an outline or you did the outline yourself, I felt liberated. So I shaped all of the pages to be as interesting as possible. I gave the most space to the most interesting pictures. It changed my whole technique.

CSS: When you switched to Marvel in 1970, did you have any problem adapting to the Marvel style of scripting?

KANE: No, I loved it. Stan [Lee] never even did any kind of plotting with you. He would simply assign a notion that he would want this type of story or that. Sometimes, he wouldn't assign anything. You'd have to come in with a notion. And once he accepted the notion, you'd go back and give him a completed story, drawn out with notes on the side as to what people were saying and what was happening in the panel. So that's how he was able to write a book a night.

CSS: Lee did say that as time went on, his plots got skimpier and skimpier...[CSS #6, pg. 62—Michael]

KANE: Well, he didn't do any plots. He wrote copy. He was excellent at that, but that's what he did. Jack [Kirby] made up everything that you saw, and Stan gave it the copy in his own style. And that's what everyone did. [Steve] Ditko, as a matter of fact, didn't even talk to Stan for about two years, two-and-a-half years. He plotted all the *Spider-Mans*, wrote out all the notes, and never once spoke to Stan in 2 1/2 years.

CSS: Do most readers that you talk to remember *Green Lantern* and *Atom*?

KANE: That's all they remember. It troubles me. Because nearly everybody takes that crappy old stuff that goes back 30, almost 35 years. As I say, I wasn't proud of it then, partly because I thought I was murdered by the inkers. And my own qualities weren't what they should have been.

JOE KUBERT

Solid story-telling and page design. Realistic, gritty art that is rarely cartoony. A proclivity for the war, jungle and costumed hero genres. Fluid, stylized inking that says a lot with a few lines. A pioneer in 3-D comics. A resume that reaches back into the Golden Age. The definitive *Sgt. Rock* and *Hawkman* artist. That's Joe Kubert, one of DC's Silver Age Front Line. "I sold my first strip at 11, 11-1/2," says the comic-artist-turned-teacher. "I should have paid them!"

Maybe so. The Brooklyn native, 65, says he's been drawing "since I was three-years-old. I always wanted to be a cartoonist. My first strip was 'Volton,' a six-page story. It ran in a book called *Catman Comics*. I got $5-a- page, which was good money in 1939. I did 'Volton' for a guy named Temerson. Geez, I can still see him—a short, fat man with a cigar sticking out of his face."

© 1969 DC Comics, Inc.

Cover of *Justice League of America* #73 by Joe Kubert.

During the Golden Age of comics, Kubert drew such super characters as the Crimson Avenger, the Star-Spangled Kid, the Shining Knight, Sargon the Sorcerer, Wildcat and the Flash. He started drawing one of two characters most associated with his name—Hawkman (the other being Sgt. Rock)—in 1944 for a five-year run.

In the early '50s, Kubert began a partnership with the late Norman Maurer, the cartoonist who later became Moe Howard's son-in-law and directed Three Stooges' features like *Around the World in a Daze* and *The Outlaws is Coming*. Kubert and Maurer both attended the High School of Music and Art, and started out in comics together (Kubert calls Maurer

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Detail of *Sgt. Rock Special* #5 cover drawn by Joe Kubert.

"one of the few certifiable geniuses of our profession"). The pair produced *Three Stooges* comic books; Kubert met the comedy trio at Maurer and Joan Howard's wedding in 1947.

With Maurer, Kubert cranked out the first-ever 3-D comic books in the mid '50s. Recalls Kubert: "I was stationed in Germany in 1951. While there, I came across a magazine printed in blue and green—with photographs, not illustrations—including a pair of red and green glasses inserted. And the effect, of course, was 3-D when you looked through the glasses.

"When I got out of the Army, Norman and I started publishing books through the St. John company. At that time, there were a heckuva lot of comic books around. Norm and I had a bull session, trying to find a way to make our books look a little different. And I said, 'Gee whiz, you know what would give our books a separate look? To do this stuff in 3-D, have the glasses inserted in the book,

HI- THIS IS JOE KUBERT AND I'M NORMAN MAURER- WE HAD OURSELVES A REAL BANG-UP TIME AND A ZILLION TIMS WORKING UP THIS BOOK FOR YOU! OUR ONLY WISH IS THAT YOU GET AS BIG A KICK OUT OF IT AS WE DID!
WE KNOW YOU MAY FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE REALLY THREE SETS OF CRAZED LUNATICS RUNNING LOOSE, BUT YOU CAN TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT- IT'S TRUE! WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THREE FUNNIER CHARACTERS JUST DON'T EXIST! THE STOOGES ARE REALLY OUT OF THIS WORLD!
THREE STOOGES

© 1949, St. John.

Joe Kubert today.

Photo by Kathy Vogheson.

and sell it accordingly.' Nobody was doing that. And then we looked at each other and said, 'Naaaah.' "

Kubert says he, Maurer and Maurer's brother Lenny eventually worked out a 3-D formula; their first 3-D comic book—*Three Dimension Comics*, which sold for 25 cents in 1953—starred Mighty Mouse. "Those first 3-D books built my house," Kubert says. "Then, the market was flooded with 3-D books. What publishers didn't realize was that 3-D itself was only a fad—you've got to have good story and art to keep selling comic books. When 3-D petered out, I went and saw Bob Kanigher at DC and got employed immediately."

At DC, Kubert eventually pencilled the third Golden Age superhero to be revived during the Silver Age (after Carmine Infantino's Flash and Gil Kane's Green Lantern): Hawkman. The new winged avenger debuted in *The Brave and the Bold* #34 in 1961. During the early Silver Age, Kubert also drew *Rip Hunter—Time Master*, *Cave Carson—Adventures Inside Earth* and *Sgt. Rock*.

By 1967, Kubert took over editorship of all DC war titles. "When I drew *Sgt. Rock*, I was illustrating a story," he says. "But when I became the editor, I sat down with (former *Sgt. Rock* editor) Bob Kanigher, who was now answering to me. I wanted to make certain that we were not glorifying war. At the end of all our stories, we added the tag line: 'Make war no more.' "

Kubert's current vocation is as head of the Joe Kubert School in Dover, NJ. But teacher Kubert has dipped his hand back into the field. He is writing, drawing and lettering *Abraham Stone*, a graphic novel series (the first edition—*Country Mouse, City Rat*—has already hit the stands, and it is gorgeous). "So I'm starting my third career," he laughs. 'Now I'm back to doing what I want to do more than anything else in the world: drawing comics."

Self-portrait cartoon of Norman Maurer and Joe Kubert seen in *The Three Stooges* comic book. Kubert and the late Maurer were pioneers in 3-D comics.

BOB OKSNER

Ever wonder—when Wolverine or the Punisher or Nomad puts somebody in the hospital—why they call them "comic books"? Wouldn't the word "comic" denote something "comical"? During the Silver Age, DC comic books weren't all capes-and-robbers; readers back then took time out for laughs once in a while. Witness *The Adventures of Jerry Lewis*. *The Adventures of Bob Hope*. *Fox and Crow*. *Sugar and Spike*. Light-hearted titles that they used to call "funny" books. Because they were, well, funny.

Bob Oksner is one of the kings of the genre. The master caricaturist who drew DC's *Jerry Lewis* and *Bob Hope* books for just about their entire runs (*Jerry* went 124 issues, and *Bob* went 109), Oksner also drew *Stanley and His Monster*, the fanciful back-up feature in *Fox and Crow* about a boy with a bedroom full of secret monsters. Stanley and His Monster was so popular that it eventually took over the Fox and Crow title—literally and figuratively. Cartoonist extraordinaire Bob Oksner spoke with CSS via phone from Florida, where he and his wife have spent the last two winters.

Born in 1916 in New York City, Bob Oksner studied at the Art Students League. He feels his collaboration with the recently-deceased Sheldon Mayer (see page 22) on the original *Leave it to Binky* was his first big break. "*Binky* was the one that I really feel got my feet on the ground at DC," the artist says. "I did that one from the very beginning until it ended (in 1958). The drawings were created by me, but the characters and the concept were created by Shelly. This was, I'd say, 1947 or '48. In those days, the concept of a 'teen-ager'—which had never existed before World War II—suddenly came into being."

In 1952, DC kicked off *The Adventures of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis*, which Oksner pencilled from issue #4. But five years later, when the comedy team of Martin and Lewis split up in real life, DC was faced with a slight dilemma. So what if the screen team went kaput—they were still selling comic books! "Well, we went and changed the title to *Adventures of Jerry Lewis*," Oksner says. "Because, Dean Martin was going out on his own as a singer, primarily, not as a comic. He wasn't a comic, he was a straight man. So we decided that we'd go with the comic."

Oksner was fast developing a specialty in the celebrity comic book genre. "For DC, most of my work in those years were comic book versions of TV comedies," the artist says. "For example, *Sgt. Bilko*, *Dobie Gillis*, *Bob Hope*. I did a *Pat Boone* book which ran for a few years. Later on, I did *Welcome Back Kotter*."

In 1965, Oksner first drew *Stanley and His Monster* as a back-up feature in *Fox and Crow* #95; by issue #109, the title officially became *Stanley and His Monster*. It was the adventures of a blonde little boy with a lisp ("I'll thave you, mithter!"), his giant, furry pink "dog" named Massachusetts, his German gnome Schnitzel and his Irish leprechaun Shaugnessy (both were short, cantankerous and green), and his ghost Napolean. Long-suffering Mom and Dad, of course, were oblivious of Stanley's monstrous menagerie. Oksner himself created the designs for *Stanley and His Monster*'s ensemble cast. "As a matter of fact," Oksner says, "*Stanley and His Monster* was kind of a predecessor to *Calvin and Hobbs*."

Oksner was also the founding artist on the girl-and-a-gorilla title *Angel and the Ape*, which debuted in *Showcase* #77 in 1968 (*A&A* won it's own title for a seven issue run ending in 1969). "I guess that was a little bit too early for its time," Oksner says. "It came out, and didn't last too long. But I think that was a great book."

Today, at 75, Oksner keeps busy with tennis, bicycling and gardening. Has the artist ever met any of the celebrities he's depicted? "For King Features, I did *I Love Lucy* from 1953 until it ended," Oksner says. "There, I met both Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball. Lucille Ball was wonderful. Fantastic. She was great to my children. Desi Arnaz was a business man. He invited me to lunch at (the nightclub) 21. Whenever he was in New York, he would invite me to lunch at 21. He was interested in improving the strip by making him handsomer. He would say, 'You made Lucy so beautiful...what can you do with *me*?'"

KURT SCHAFFENBERGER

The "kinder, gentler" nation George Bush spoke of doesn't exist in the real world, but you can find it in the four-color fantasy world. Just look in the pages of any Silver Age issue of *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*. Some adjectives that come to mind when trying to describe the vibe one gets from reading a Kurt Schaffenberger *Lois Lane* story: friendly, wholesome, All-American. Smiling, sweet, sunny.

As frequent Schaffenberger-inker Dave Hunt once observed: "Kurt's style is more '40s than anything else, and that's the charm of it." Hunt may have hammered the nail on the head. Because that post-World War II sense of optimism shines through in Schaffenberger's pages. Look and see.

But this is not to make it sound like Schaffenberger's stuff is overly sugary. The claws do come out once in a while—there *is* an edge to it. For one thing, Schaffenberger never shies away from rendering the feminine form in all of its natural, linear beauty. Lemme tellya—that Lois had one tight waist, and pin-up perfect gams (always in high heels). And the artist often poked fun at his own heroine when he depicted the gamut of emotions she couldn't mask: curiosity when on the scent of a "scoop"; jealousy when Superman paid too much attention to rival Lana Lang; anger when confronting him about said crime; elation when wrapped in the Man of Steel's bulging arms.

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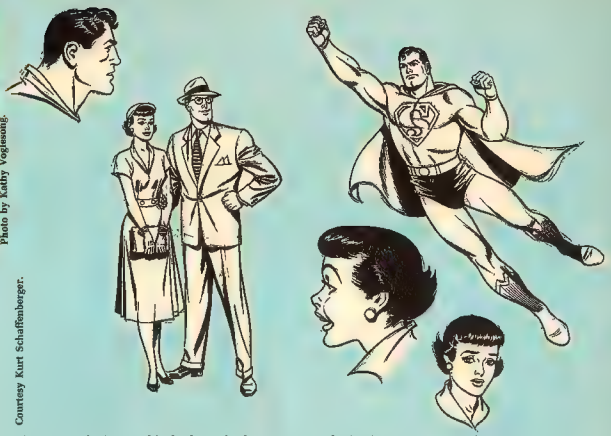
Make it TYCO
IF YOUR DEALER IS OUT OF STOCK ON TYCO CHASSIS, SEND 35¢ TO REPUBLIC TOY PROPERTY NOVELTY, DEPT.
IT'S SO MUCH MORE FUN TO OWN THE VERY BEST.
© 1967, Tyco Toys.

Kurt Schaffenberger drew many toy ads that appeared in comics during the Silver Age. This one is for Tyco Trains.

Schaffenberger was the definitive artist on *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*—one of the kindest, gentlest titles of the Silver Age. His instantly-

Photo by Kathy Vogiesong.

Kurt Schaffenberger holds up a pencilled page from the forthcoming 3-D comic book, *Daughters of Time*.



Courtesy Kurt Schaffenberger.

This never-before-published work shows Kurt Schaffenberger's tryout drawings that he submitted to editor Mort Weisinger in 1957 when he auditioned for *Lois Lane* artist at DC.

recognizable style is characterized by distinctive faces, flawless anatomy, simple layouts (sprinkled with circle crops and silhouettes), uncluttered panels, and heavily-referenced locales, animals, transportation vehicles, machinery, etc. There is only one Kurt Schaffenberger, and he spoke with CSS in an interview conducted in his New Jersey home.

Born in Zella-Mehlis, Germany in 1920, he moved to Connecticut when he was seven, graduated from New York's Pratt Institute in 1941 and spent 3 1/2 years in the service during World War II. He drew for Jack Binder's shop during the '40s and '50s. "The first job I can recall working on was doing backgrounds for *Captain Marvel* stories," he says.

In 1957, Jack Binder's brother Otto—who was writing stories for DC's new *Lois Lane* comic book (she debuted as a solo in *Showcase* #9)—suggested Schaffenberger to Mort Weisinger. Thus, he began on the assignment that still stands as his all-time favorite: *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*. "It was just a secondary character in the Superman series, and they gave her her own book," he says. "And I got a chance to do something more creative."

The *Lois Lane* stories were very light-hearted and often romantic. Lois was indeed Superman's girlfriend, but marriage seemed like an unrealistic hope. Plus, she was always jealous of Lana Lang, who Superman dated when he was Superboy back in Smallville. When Lana figured in the plot, Schaffenberger would draw Lois as the villain, with arched eyebrows and nails at-the-ready. He chuckles at the observation. "Whatever the story called for," he says.

Schaffenberger's artwork can often be found in Silver Age books he didn't pencil, since he is the most prolific toy ad artist of the era. His easy-to-spot style has graced ads for Ideal Boaterific, Ideal Motorific Cars, the Captain Action doll, Tyco Trains and Parker Brothers' Avalanche game, to name but a few.

Schaffenberger drew *Lois Lane* from 1957 until 1968. "Then they gave me *Supergirl* to do," the artist says. "I was not happy with drawing *Supergirl*, but it was an assignment. That was about the time Carmine Infantino came in as big cheese up at DC, and Mort Weisinger went out. When Carmine first took over, I was out at DC for about two years. Why, I still don't know. I think it was because I was the only artist, really, that was involved in trying to organize a union. For those two years, I did work for Archie, American Comics...whatever I could grab hold of. And then after about two years, Carmine said, 'You're forgiven. Come back.'"

LOIS LANE
RELEASE ME, I AIR MORTAL, AND MY BLACK MAGIC I'LL GRANT YOU EVERY WISH!
LOIS! DON'T FALL FOR HIS LINE...HE'S TRYING TO TRICK YOU INTO TAKING HIS PLACE IN THE BOTTLE!
featuring "The DEMON IN THE BOTTLE!"
© 1967 DC Comics, Inc.

Kurt Schaffenbereger's cover for *Lois Lane* #76.

Nothing came of the attempt at forming a union ("That thing died"), but it was apparent that the rights of artists and writers needed to be addressed. "Back in those days," he points out, "on the back of every check you got from DC, where you endorsed the check you signed away all of your future rights, whether it was artwork or writing or whatever. Right on the check."

In the early '70s, DC was padding out its family of Superman comic books with reprints, many of them featuring artwork by Schaffenberger. This was happy news for readers—it increased their chances of seeing some of Schaffenberger's best work—but unhappy for the artists, since they received no payments for reprints. "Since then, we not only get reprint money, we get royalty money," Schaffenberger says. "After it reaches a certain point in sales, we get royalties. The whole situation has improved tremendously since I first started in the field, or since I first even started with DC."

Schaffenberger's lighthearted style is a far cry from the so-called "dark style" that is prevalent in the current product. "I don't care for [the dark style] at all," he said. "Most of the stuff that is being produced now is so far out, I can't even relate to it. Oh! Everything starts out with the premise that the world is already blown up, and let's see what we can do to rebuild it. It's really downbeat." Referring to the lighthearted tone of his older stuff like *Superman's Girlfriend Lois Lane*, Schaffenberger said, "That's what it should be, I think. They're still called 'comics.'"

THE EC STORY!

How Bill Gaines raced ahead of his time— until a Senate Subcommittee took the wind out of his sails!

Detail from cover of *Haunt of Fear* #17 (1952), showing goopy zombies by Graham "Ghastly" Ingels.

By MARK VOGER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Sadly—as we were about to go to press with this, one of the strangest stories in comics history—we received word that William Gaines had passed away. He died June 3, 1992, at age 70. He is survived by his wife Annie and three children, Cathy Missud, Wendy Bucci and Chris Gaines. We now respectfully present Bill's last interview exactly as it was originally written.

EC. Those two little letters evoke a whole world of murderers and monsters, spaceships and soldiers, aliens and astronauts, thugs and molls, zombies and witch doctors, all presented by what was possibly the greatest troupe of artists ever assembled as a team. Maybe you're a child of the 1950s whose mind was blown by EC's gory, glorious horror comics. Or maybe you're a child of the 1990s experiencing the world of EC for the first time through reprints. But chances are, from the moment you first laid eyes on an Entertaining Comics story—you were hooked.

EC was "born" in the mid-'40s, but the roots of EC go back further, to the very dawning of the comic book. The calendar pages flutter, flutter, flutter, as we travel back to that fateful day in 1933, when M.C. "Max" Gaines was throwing out some old Sunday newspapers. He paused to read the funnies section and discovered something unusual. He laughed at them for a second time. These comics, he learned, had staying power. At that moment, a concept was hatched that would one day spawn an industry.

Gaines conceived the idea to reprint Sunday funnies in a single volume as premiums—"giveaways"—to help manufacturers push their products. The following year, Gaines put together *Famous Funnies* #1, the first comic book to be sold (it cost 10 cents in 1934—never mind what you'd pay for it today), effectively creating the comic book industry.

Flash forward to 1945. That year, Gaines founded EC, though at the time the initials stood for "Educational Comics." The original EC turned out such wholesome titles as the Picture Stories series—*Picture Stories From the Bible,...From American History,... From World History,...From Science*—and cutesy, "kiddie" titles like *Tiny Tot Comics, Animal Fables, Dandy Comics* and *Reddy Kilowatt*. Not a zombie or an alien in the bunch.

But tragedy struck on August 20, 1947, when M.C. Gaines died in a freak boating accident on New York's Lake Placid, where he kept a summer home. Enter: William Gaines. Thought of by his late father as a ne'r-do-well, young Bill strolled into the EC office with no concept of what it means to be a publisher. He was all of 25.

The post-M.C. Gaines EC began taking shape when artist Al Feldstein, looking for work, first visited the office in 1948. A rapport developed; Gaines and Feldstein started developing western and crime titles (*Saddle Justice* #3 became the first EC comic to break away from the "Educational Comics" format), and the newsstand returns started improving. The two put out the first of an eight-issue run of *Modern Love* in 1949.

Gaines' game plan began to form. He would take a more exploitative—hence, more commercial—approach than did his father. Out went the cutesy "talking animal" and educational titles; EC now stood for "Entertaining Comics." And Gaines would change a few other names besides that of the company. To avoid the $2,000 charge required by the U.S. Post Office for mailing permits for new magazines, Gaines subtly changed the names of established titles—retaining the numbering—so the post office wouldn't notice (but, as Gaines points out, he didn't always get away with it).

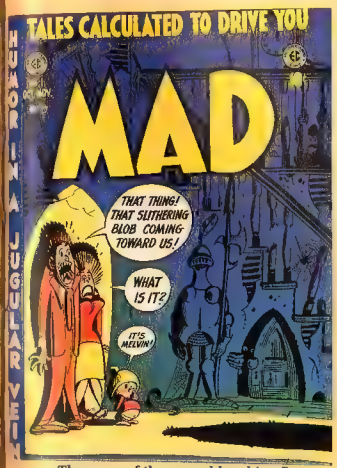
And so, *International Comics* became *International Crime Comics*, which became *Crime Patrol*, which became *Crypt of Terror*, which became *Tales From the Crypt*. *Flat and Slat* became *Gunfighter*, which became *Haunt of Fear*. *War Against Crime* became *Vault of Horror*. *Happy Houlihans* became *Saddle Justice*, which became *Saddle Romance*, which became *Weird Science*. *Moon Girl* became *Moon Girl Fights Crime*,

which became—get this—*A Moon, A Girl...Romance*, which became *Weird Fantasy*. And then, as if things weren't confusing enough, *Weird Science* and *Weird Fantasy* merged to become *Weird Science-Fantasy*, which then became *Incredible Science Fiction*. PHEW!

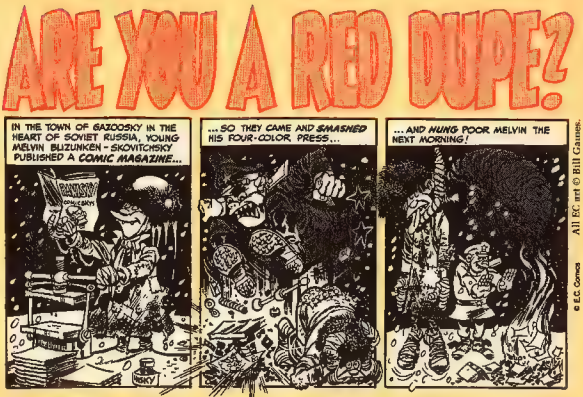
EC's first horror story, "Zombie Terror," appeared in 1948 in *Moon Girl* #5. The "Crypt Keeper" made his first appearance in *Crime Patrol* #15 in 1950. That same year, *Crypt of Terror* #17 (which was really *Crypt of Terror* #1 or—following the chronology—*International Comics* #17) was the first "New Trend" comic book, as Gaines came to refer to his new, sensational EC books.

And so EC was off and running. The titles we associate with EC today were cluttering the newsstands during these, EC's glory years (1950-1955). Prolific artist-turned-writer-turned-editor Al Feldstein edited EC's horror, sci-fi and crime titles *Tales From the Crypt*, *Haunt of Fear*, *Vault of Horror*, *Weird Fantasy*, *Weird Science*, *Crime Suspenstories*, *Shock Suspenstories* and *Panic* (a *Mad* companion). Harvey Kurtzman—who would eventually create Mad for EC—edited EC's two action titles, *Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat*.

Competitors began to crank out substandard imitations of EC's horror comics. What set EC's product above the pack were its excellent scripts—and what scripts they were. Grim and grisly, yes, but surprisingly literate. And, on occasion, downright ingenious. Yep, there was some real



The cover of the ground-breaking first issue of *Mad* (1952). The world hasn't been the same since.


ARE YOU A RED DUPE?
IN THE TOWN OF GAZOOSKY IN THE HEART OF SOVIET RUSSIA, YOUNG MELVIN BUZUNKEN-SKOVITCHSKY PUBLISHED A COMIC MAGAZINE...
...SO THEY CAME AND SMASHED HIS FOUR-COLOR PRESS...
...AND HUNG POOR MELVIN THE NEXT MORNING!
© E.C. Comics
All EC and © Bill Gaines.
• HERE IN AMERICA, WE CAN STILL PUBLISH COMIC MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SLICKS, BOOKS AND THE BIBLE. WE DON'T HAVE TO SEND THEM TO A CENSOR FIRST. NOT YET...
• BUT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD LIKE TO CENSOR... WHO WOULD LIKE TO SUPPRESS COMICS. IT ISN'T THAT THEY DON'T LIKE COMICS FOR THEM! THEY DON'T LIKE THEM FOR YOU!
• THESE PEOPLE SAY THAT COMIC BOOKS AREN'T AS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AS NO COMIC BOOKS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE NO-GOODS. SOME ARE DO-GOODERS. SOME ARE WELL-MEANING. AND SOME ARE JUST PLAIN MEAN.
• BUT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH AN AMAZING REVELATION. AFTER MUCH SEARCHING OF NEWSPAPER FILES, WE'VE MADE AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY:
THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!

The "Are You a Red Dupe" house ad, a gag editorial that got EC scrutinized during the Senate Subcommittee on Un-American Activities investigation of 1954.

Shakespeare to be found in among the beheadings, disembowelings, eye-gougings, stabbings, poisonings and other resourceful methods of murder which peppered EC's tales of marital infidelity, corporate corruption, irony, revenge and twisted justice.

But the fun would not last forever. As early as 1948, public comic book burnings (shades of Hitler, eh?) were held in New York City, Birmingham, and Chicago. In 1954, New York psychiatrist Dr. Fredric Wertham authored *Seduction of the Innocent* (subtitle: *The Influence of Comic Books on Today's Youth*), the sensationalistic book that helped get the anti-comics ball rolling. This mounting negative publicity prompted parents to look over their comics-reading children's shoulders, and they were often shocked by what they saw. In April 1954, a subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency held sessions at the U.S. Court House at Foley Square in New York City. Among those testifying were Wertham...and William Gaines.

At the session—broadcast live on national television—Gaines read an opening statement. His carefully-worded-though-indignant comments have gone down in comic book history. "Two decades ago, my father was instrumental in starting the comic book industry," Gaines began. "He edited the first few issues of the first modern comic book magazine, *Famous Funnies*. My father was proud of the industry he helped to found. He was bringing enjoyment to millions of people. The heritage he left is the vast comic book industry, which employs writers, artists, engravers and printers. It has weaned hundreds of thousands of children from pictures to the printed word. It has stirred their imagination, given them an outlet for their problems and frustrations, but most important, given them millions of hours of entertainment."

Later on came the meat of Gaines' statement: "I publish horror comics. I was the first publisher in these United States to publish horror comics. I am responsible. I started them. Some may not like them. That is a matter of personal taste. It would be just as difficult to explain the harmless thrill of a horror story to a Dr. Wertham as it would be to explain the sublimeness of love to a frigid old maid."

The EC era had come to an end, but one title—Kurtzman's humor comic *Mad*, which debuted in the summer of 1952—was continuing to sell. Kurtzman had badgered Gaines into converting *Mad* into a black-and-white magazine format (with color covers) by *Mad* #24, but quit EC in 1956 with *Mad* #28. Gaines answered by appointing Al Feldstein as editor. Mad continued to burgeon into the American institution it is today. Gaines' empire was saved. The rest, as they say, is history.

And to help shed some light on the history of this great comic book company, COMICS SCENE SPECTACULAR has tracked down eight major players in the EC story. Meet publisher William Gaines, artists Jack Davis, Jack Kamen, Joe Orlando, Will Elder, Al Williamson and John Severin, and colorist Marie Severin, who all shared their behind-the-scenes memories of Entertaining Comics . . .

BILL GAINES

If there are violent psychopaths out there whose minds were destroyed by reading the EC horror comics of the 1950s, they have one man to thank: William M. Gaines. The publisher of EC comics—still top banana at Mad magazine after 40 years—was born in New York in 1922.

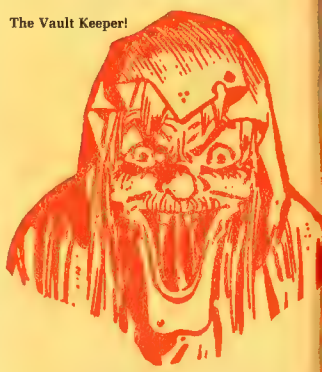
Today, Gaines' great horror, crime, action and science fiction EC comic books are as accessible as ever, now on sale in quality reprints at your local comic shop. "Russ Cochran has done a tremendous job in keeping EC alive all these years," says Gaines. Legendary for his extravagant parties, paternal manner and love for pranks, publisher/philosopher/wine connoisseur William M. Gaines spoke with CSS via phone from the *Mad* office, where he still holds court.

CSS: When you were a young lad, did you follow your father's career? Did you read his comic books?
GAINES: Oh, sure. They were free, so I read 'em (laughs).
CSS: Was it your idea to take over the business or were you pushed into it?
GAINES: I was pushed into it by my mother. I wanted to be a chemistry teacher.
CSS: Did you have a game plan when you went in?

The Crypt Keeper, as drawn by Jack Davis.

GAINES: None whatsoever.
CSS: Did you think that you would fail? Were you worried about that?
GAINES: I knew I would fail.
CSS: How long had you been operating as publisher at Educational Comics before you developed your first title, the first solo title that you originated?
GAINES: Well, Al Feldstein joined us about 1948, and we started developing titles at that point. Let's see...we had *Gunfighter, Saddle Justice*—I kind of inherited *War Against Crime* and *Crime Patrol*—I think we started *Modern Love, Saddle Romances, A Moon, A Girl...Romance* . . .
CSS: You published the first-ever horror comics, but was there any sort of a precursor to the types of stories you did? The horror movies of the time did not have stories like yours. What was your reference? The pulps?
GAINES: Well, the pulps I had read as a kid. But Al and I put those twist endings on them. We called them "O. Henry" endings. Almost every story we wrote from the beginning had a twist. Sometimes it wasn't a very good twist, but it was an attempt at a twist (laughs) to surprise the reader. This was kind of unique with EC.
CSS: Would you explain the "springboard" system of plotting you developed with Al Feldstein?
GAINES: I brought in the springboards, because in those days I was on diets and I took diet pills, and one of the side effects of diet pills is they keep you up all night. Specifically, I was taking something called dexadrine. Consequently, I would come in every day with a whole pile of springboards, which was just a line. I'd read, read, read, and as I read, I would get ideas. From each story I read, I'd probably get 10 ideas. And I'd just jot them down in a one-sentence springboard. And I'd bring them in, and then the thing was to sell it to Feldstein. That was a big thing. Because he would turn down almost everything I brought up. Of course, I'd bring it up the next day, and he might take it, but that day he'd turn it down. Until finally we got something he'd agree to do, and then we plotted it together. And then he went in and actually wrote it. He was a great writer. Maybe his stuff was a little too heavy for comics, but we got a lot of story in. And that's how it was done.
CSS: You had your stable of artists, and each one had his special talents. How did you tailor your scripts to your artists?
GAINES: Oh, well, every day we'd know who we had to write a story for. Depending on who we had to write it for, that's the kind of story we wrote.
CSS: So you'd do a weirder thing for Ingels...
GAINES: Oh, Ingels got all the sloppy, gooey, yucky stuff. Orlando could go either way. Jack Kamen was usually the clean stuff. Johnny Craig—with whom I'd worked independently—he and I would stay at the office one night a month, and do his story exactly the same way I'd do Al's. Al would knock it off in three hours; it would take Johnny a week to write it, and three weeks to draw it. He was very slow. But he did very clean, meticulous work. Evans could go either way.
CSS: Kamen was really good for those infidelity stories.
GAINES: Yeah, where everything was cleanly drawn. We called them "Buster" stories. At some point, the girl would always say to the guy: "Look, Buster!"
CSS: Before the public outcry over horror comics, did you and Al occasionally look at a script or

The Vault Keeper!



artwork and chuckle sardonically to yourselves, "This is pretty nasty stuff?"
GAINES: Oh, many times (laughs). A lot of what we did was pretty nasty stuff. Somehow we knew that somebody would get us at the end of the road, but it was fun while it lasted.
CSS: Oh, you did have that feeling?
GAINES: Oh, yeah. Well, the New York legislature kept passing bills against horror comics, and Governor Dewey kept vetoing them, but we knew this couldn't go on forever. And then finally it went national.
CSS: You used to run house ads that said, "We at EC are proudest of our science fiction magazines."
GAINES: Yeah, we loved that stuff. They lost money most of the time, but we didn't care. We ran the business from the point of view of an entity. If the business was making money, that was fine. It didn't matter to us that part of the business was making it all, and part of the business was losing it. We just enjoyed our science fiction.

And we enjoyed Kurtzman's stuff, too. He did wonderful stuff, but it generally lost money.

CSS: How did the Ray Bradbury connection come about with your science fiction titles?

GAINES: We stole a few of his stories, and he caught us. He sends a letter, "I think you have overlooked sending me some royalties for this, that and that." We instantly sent him his royalties. He didn't ask for very much, maybe $25 a story. We asked him if we could now adapt his stories for so much a story. And he agreed and we adapted many of them.

CSS: Did he like them?

GAINES: Oh, Al did a magnificent job on them. Bradbury loved them. The only thing he was offended by was our exclamation points (laughs). We never used a period anywhere. Every sentence ended in an exclamation point. This was almost comic format at the time. So when Bradbury complained, we stopped. At a certain point, you may notice that the Bradbury stories no longer have exclamation points.

CSS: One reads that Harvey Kurtzman poured himself into research for *Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat*, and wasn't quite as prolific—to say the least—as Al Feldstein . . .

GAINES: Correct.

CSS:...during that time, did you ever encourage Kurtzman to do less research, maybe sacrifice a little of that, to get more productivity out of him?

GAINES: No. No. But of course, that's how Mad was born. Harvey was doing two to Al's seven, and so he was getting two-sevenths as much, because I paid by the page and the book. And I said, "Harvey, you're a humorist! Why don't you throw a humor magazine in between your two bi-monthlies and increase your output to three magazines every two months instead of two? Your income will go up 50 percent!" Of course, it didn't work that way because he put so much time into *Mad* that he had to drop one of his other magazines (laughs), so he was back where he started. He was just meticulous.

CSS: When you view films of your younger self testifying before the senate sub-committee on juvenile delinquency, can you remember how you felt at the time?

GAINES: Scared out of my mind.

CSS: You came across as pretty confident in the footage I've seen.

GAINES: That was at the beginning (laughs). That was when I made my statement. After that, they started pummeling me. My dexadrine wore off. This dexadrine keeps you hyper, but when it wears off, it leaves you like a limp rag. Halfway through the testimony, it wore off, and I didn't have any with me. I just was sitting there like a punch-drunk fighter getting pummeled.

CSS: Had you ever spoken man-to-man with Frederic Wertham?

GAINES: No. I've got a delightful picture of him reading a copy of *Shock Suspenstories* (laughs).

CSS: Where do you keep that?

GAINES: I don't know. When he died, I was gonna put it up on the wall, but I never got around to it. (Inaudible voice in the background speaks). (To the voice) Is it up there? Wertham, yeah? (To CSS) Yeah, I have it on the wall (laughs).

CSS: When the tide had turned and things were looking bad and wholesalers were returning unopened bundles of books, did you try pleading your case to them? And what sort of feedback were you getting from them?

GAINES: No, I never tried. I wasn't going to beg the bastards.

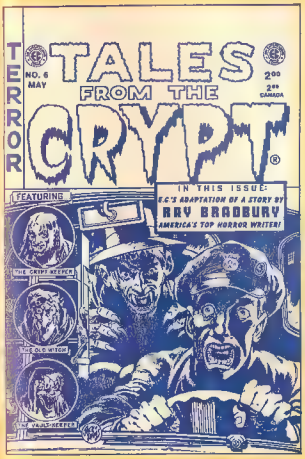
CSS: Looking back, do you think that the Comics Code Authority (CCA) seal was a necessary evil to keep the industry alive?

GAINES: It was a necessary evil to get your books out, because the wholesalers wouldn't accept books—unless they were Disney-type stuff—that didn't have the seal.

CSS: Your "New Direction" books—like *Impact* and *Extra!* and *M.D.* and *Piracy*—they didn't bear the seal?

GAINES: Well, the first issues didn't, and then I put the seal on. Didn't help. Everything came back unopened.

CSS: Did you feel you were blacklisted by then?



The cover of the "new" *Tales From the Crypt* #6, a recent reprint by Russ Cochran. These reprints are very accessible at $2 per double-sized issue.

A Graham "Ghastly" Ingels zombie, silhouetted from the cover of *Haunt of Fear* #12 (1952).

GAINES: Yes.

CSS: Did you feel at this point—when business was really bad—that it was over and you would have to enter a new field?

GAINES: Yes.

CSS: Were you depressed?

GAINES: Yes.

CSS: Comic historians always say that converting Mad into a magazine format saved your empire. Did you do this to make a fresh start?

GAINES: No, no. I've been denying this story for years, but nobody listens. I changed *Mad* to a magazine because Kurtzman was going to leave. The only way I kept Kurtzman was by offering to change *Mad* from a comic to a magazine, which is some-

Tales art © 1998 EC Publications, Inc. by Sergio Aragones.

thing he had brought up to me previously and I had refused to do. Now I did it as a way to keep him, and it worked. He stayed with *Mad*. For a while. And that's why I switched to a magazine. Now it looks as though I had switched to avoid the association. But that was not why I did it.

CSS: Looking back on all of your years, what did you feel was your career highlight?

GAINES: I think when I was awarded the Grimmy at the Horror Hall of Fame this past year. That finally vindicated all the work we had all done back in the EC days. It was nice to see somebody finally give the whole outfit credit for it. EC Comics were put into the Horror Hall of Fame, along with people like Bela Lugosi, Boris Karloff, Vincent Price and all kinds of famous actors and producers and directors. We feel we're in great company there.

JACK DAVIS

He was, at one time, the most successful commercial artist in the U.S. His unmistakable, quirky, funny style has helped to sell everything from movies to soft drinks to *Time* magazine. He was a founding *Mad* artist, and is still as identified with that American institution as any of your Druckers, your Bergs, your Arogoneses or your Jaffees. But...there's a skeleton in his closet (eh, eh, eh).

The great Jack Davis was a great EC horror artist. And though he's a trifle embarrassed by some of his EC work (one story in particular about a gruesome baseball game wouldn't exist if Davis owned a time machine), the affable cartoonist spoke frankly about his EC days and beyond with CSS via phone from Georgia, where he lives in semi-retirement.

Jack Davis was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1926, entered the Navy in 1943 (drawing *Boondocker* for the Navy News), was discharged in 1946 and joined EC in 1951. "The EC office then was down on Canal Street or Lafayette Street, which was thought of in the Italian district of New York, way downtown," Davis reminisces. "I remember going there for the first time, and finding it and saying, 'Oh, God, this is a crummy place. It's not even uptown!' "

Photo by Tom Anderson.

Jack Davis' latest self-portrait.

SO NOW YOU KNOW, FIENDS. NOW YOU KNOW WHY THERE IS A BALL GAME BEING PLAYED IN THE MOONLIGHT AT MIDNIGHT IN THE DESERTED CENTRAL CITY BALL PARK. LOOK CLOSELY. SEE THIS STRANGE BASEBALL GAME! SEE THE LONG STRINGS OF PULPY INTESTINES THAT MARK THE BASE LINES. SEE THE TWO LUNGS AND THE LIVER THAT INDICATE THE BASES...THE HEART THAT IS HOME PLATE. SEE DOC WHITE SEND AND WHISK THE HEART WITH THE MANGY SCALP, YELLING ..
PLAY BALL... BATTER UP!
LET'S GO PHILLY, BOY! PITCH IT IN...
SEE THE BATTER COME TO THE PLATE SWINGING THE LEGS, THE ARMS, THEN THROWING ALL BUT ONE AWAY AND STANDING IN THE BOX WAITING FOR THE PITCHER TO HURL THE HEAD IN TO HIM. SEE THE CATCHER WITH THE TORSO STRAPPED ON AS A CHEST-PROTECTOR, THE INFIELDERS WITH THEIR HAND-MITTS, THE STOMACH-ROSIN-BAG, AND ALL THE OTHER PIECES OF EQUIPMENT THAT ONCE WAS CENTRAL CITY'S STAR PITCHER, HERBIE SATTEN..
AND IN THE MORNING, WATCH THE FACES OF THE FANS AS THEY PACK THE PARK AND SEE THE GREEN GRASS NOW STAINED RED, AND SEE THE HASTILY SUBSTITUTED PITCHER STEP TO THE RUBBER AND STARE DOWN AT THE STONE PLAQUE EMBEDDED THERE WITH THE ENGRAVED WORDS MEMORIALIZING THE GORY REMAINS BURIED BENEATH THE PITCHER'S MOUND.
GOOD LORD!
HERBERT SATTEN BELOVED PITCHER R.I.P.
HEH, HEH! SO THAT'S MY YELP-YARN FOR THIS ISSUE, KIDDIES. HERBIE, THE PITCHER, WENT TO PIECES THAT NIGHT AND WAS TAKEN OUT...OUT OF EXISTENCE, THAT IS! THE PLAQUE TURNED OUT TO BE HIS GRAVE STONE, AND THE PITCHER'S MOUND HIS GRAVE. OH, BY THE WAY, NEXT TIME YOU GO SEE CENTRAL CITY PLAY, BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU SIT. THAT NIGHT ONE OF BAYVILLE'S BOYS HIT A HOMER, INTO THE STANDS. THEY NEVER FOUND THE... HEH, HEH... 'BALL' 'BYE, NOW. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAD, TALES FROM THE CRYPT!

The final page of the story "Foul Play" from *Haunt of Fear* #19 (1953) is one that Jack Davis would rather forget. We present it now not to annoy the gracious artist, but as part of comics history. Sorry, Jack!

"Again, it was really a kind of a spoof. But then when it got so serious, I said, 'My God, what am I doing? I'm probably scaring a lot of kids!' "

Davis is reminded—much to his chagrin—of the infamous story he illustrated for *Haunt of Fear* #19 in 1953 entitled "Foul Play," in which a baseball team takes revenge on an opponent by playing a midnight, moonlit baseball game with his body parts; his scalp becomes an umpire's brush, his heart is home plate, his intestines are the base lines, his limbs are used as bats, toward which his head is pitched. It's a twist ending O. Henry would never have dreamt of.

"That was awful," Davis declares. "I wish I'd never done it. Because it all keeps popping up, and it's really gory. You know, that's a horrible thing. And that's just not my style. I don't like things like that. I don't do

Davis began drawing stories that appeared in *Haunt of Fear*, *Tales From the Crypt* and *Vault of Horror* for editor Al Feldstein. Davis says he was usually encouraged by Feldstein to do those gory "shock" panels that appeared at the end of stories like "Taint the Meat, It's the Humanity," "The Chips Are Down" and "Graft in Concrete." "That was the twist," Davis says of those gruesome panels.

things like that. You know, I could be doing a lot of things for *Playboy*, but when I started having kids, I just didn't want my kids to be exposed to all that. So I've kind of gone the straight and narrow."

More to Davis' liking was *Mad*, EC's humor title which Kurtzman kicked off in 1952. "We'd all sit down," Davis says. "I think it was Wally Wood and Johnny Severin and Willy Elder and myself. This was a new title. We were going to come out with something funny instead of something horrible. And it wasn't going to be another *Archie* book or something. Bob and Ray were on the radio at the time, and they were very, very funny. They'd sort of do little takeoffs of things. So Harvey just came up with the idea that we would lampoon everything."

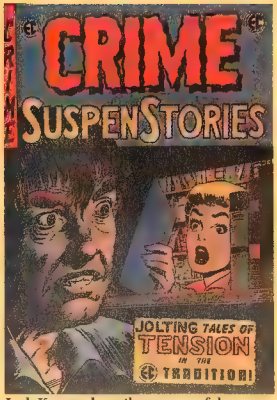
But starting in 1956, Davis quit *Mad* for a nine-year stretch. "The good lord works in strange ways," Davis says. "Me leaving *Mad* at the time forced me to go out and find a different kind of a field besides the comic books. I got into advertising, which was a big break for me. At that time, I didn't have a rep. But all of a sudden, the phone started ringing. I was making very good money that I had never made before in the comic books. So advertising really took off. I've always contributed to *Mad*, and *Mad* pays good rates now, I think. It's just a good situation."

JACK KAMEN

William Gaines calls them "buster" stories. Because, somewhere along the line, the dame in the yarn always gets the drop on the fella, and she goes: "Listen, Buster!" EC artist Jack Kamen was the absolute consummate master of the "buster" story.

Remembers the artist: "They'd usually have to tailor it so it wouldn't have too much blood or gore or guts, since I couldn't do—or was very bad at—the horrible stuff like Jack Davis or Graham Ingels did. They had to write kind of clean stuff for me. If you notice, I used to get the story where the woman is the killer. *Double Indemnity* was a popular movie at the time, where the woman gets together with the man and kills the husband for the insurance. That was my style. I used to draw sexy women. So they utilized that by making the female character the lead. Those stories were written for me."

Born in 1920 in Brooklyn, Jack Kamen studied at the Art Students League and privately with Harvey Dunn. The young artist started out doing dry-brush ink drawings for the interiors of detective and western pulp magazines. "Those died when comic books came in," Kamen tells CSS in an interview partially conducted in his New Hampshire home. "Kids read them instead of the pulps. But the same guys wrote 'em—the guys who wrote the pulps also wrote the comic books."



Jack Kamen drew the suspenseful cover of *Crime Suspenstories* #27 (1955).

After toiling in the pulps, Kamen broke into the comics. Kamen appeared regularly in *Tales From the Crypt*, *Haunt of Fear* and *Vault of Horror*, and became known around the EC office as an ardent joke-teller (a fact which was parodied in the Kamen-pencilled story "Den of Iniquity"). "My relationship with EC was a beautiful one, " Kamen recalls. "The friendship between myself and Al Feldstein and Bill Gaines was very, very deep. We socialized."

Like so many of the EC artists, Kamen was concerned for his livelihood when Dr. Fredric Wertham's book *Seduction of the Innocent* and Senator Estes Kefauver's committee on juvenile delinquency inspired the

CLOSE CALL!
YOUR NAME IS DOCTOR ANNETTE BEARD! RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT, YOU ARE STANDING IN THE MIDDLE OF TIMES SQUARE IN THE HEART OF NEW YORK CITY! AND ALL AROUND YOU IS SILENCE ..THE SILENCE OF DEATH
OH, LORD! WILL I EVER FIND ANOTHER HUMAN BEING ALIVE?
YES, DOCTOR BEARD! AT THIS MOMENT, MORTAL FEAR GRIPS YOUR HEART! THE TERROR OF LONELINESS CHILLS YOUR SPINE! FOR YOU, DOCTOR, ARE THE ONLY LIVING CREATURE ALIVE IN THE WHOLE WORLD...
EVERYTHING...EVERYTHING IS MINE! ANY CAR I WANT! ALL THE JEWELRY I WANT! MONEY...CLOTHES...BUT WHAT...SOB...GOOD IS IT?

"Close Call" from *Weird Fantasy* #14 (1952) was a Jack Kamen "buster" story if there ever was one!

EC's "buster" story specialist, Jack Kamen, in front of his New Hampshire home.

public uproar that eventually brought an end to Entertaining Comics. "Being a young man and having all my family born," Kamen says, "it was very, very scary. We were paid, for the time, rather generously. I felt this public outcry was going to effect my income. Bill called a meeting. Whatever he had in his bank account, he paid us for a number of months. But he wasn't getting any money at all, because the distributors weren't putting the books out. There were a number of distributors—nationwide—who would just receive the books, not even unpack them and send them back. So there was just no money at all. But Bill was absolutely marvelous. He didn't have to do it. As soon as I didn't need it anymore, I told him: 'Bill, I'm on my own now.' I had begun to make samples and drifted into advertising art. I told Bill, 'I'm making good bucks. I don't need this.' The advertising market was head-and-shoulders above comics, as far as income was concerned. I made 16 times as much per panel as what comic books paid."

Forty years later, Jack Kamen is a well-to-do, influential man. Kamen and his family have, in Kamen's words, "done very well" in the medical and helicopter businesses. The Kamens know President Bush—Jack's son Dean is a frequent White House guest—and have founded a hands-on science museum called Science Enrichment Encounters (SEE) in Manchester, NH. In fact, President Bush once visited the museum!

The Kamens are in the process of founding a science hall of fame—For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST)—for which Kamen plans to illustrate comic book biographies of heroes in science (shades of the early EC title *Picture Stories From Science!*). "We could do Steinmetz, we could do Edison, we could do some of the astronauts," Kamen says. The science comics would be Kamen's first comic book work in almost four decades. "When you switch to advertising art, what happens is you lose the whole comic book touch completely," Kamen laughs. "So if I do the books, I don't know what the hell they're going to look like!"

What irony! In the 1950s, EC artist Jack Kamen lost his job drawing horror comics because of a U.S. Senate subcommittee! In the 1990s, he pals around with President George Bush, as wife Evelyn Kamen looks on.

Courtesy Jack Kamen.

JOE ORLANDO

Poor Joe Orlando must have had something of an identity crisis. EC hired him because his artwork—so they said—resembled that of Wally Wood. Even in the biography they published on Orlando, they referred to him as "another Wood." Which sure must've been tough on the old ego for Orlando, eh?

But a robot was to come to Orlando's rescue—a fictional robot named Adam Link, which Orlando brought to life with his pen. "Because of the initial success of the Adam Link stories," Orlando says, "my peers began to notice my work, to distinguish me from Wally Wood. So I did have an affection for Adam Link."

Wood comparisons aside, Orlando was a close friend of his late, great fellow EC science fiction specialist. "I met Wally Wood outside of an agent's waiting room," the 65-year-old Bali, Italy native tells CSS from his office at DC Comics. "We were both going to show our portfolios, looking for work. We struck up a conversation. He showed me his portfolio and I showed him mine, and it became a mutual admiration society. After our interview, we went for coffee and talked some more. We decided that we should work together—that it would be easier for us to get work together."

Orlando and Wood founded an art studio, cranking out work for the likes of Charleton, Ziff-Davis, and Avon. When Wood went to EC in 1951, Orlando went his separate way. But soon after, Orlando followed his former partner to the EC office. There, he drew the odd crime or horror story for EC, but preferred science fiction. "The science fiction easily had a bizarre twist to it," Orlando says, "except for the Adam Link stuff, which was kind of sweet."

Adam Link was the robot hero in a series of stories written by Eando Binder, the first and most famous of which is "I, Robot." Link was a robot with feelings and intelligence who was sometimes more human than the actual humans surrounding him. Orlando's sensitive handling of the series—not to mention his novel, futuristic robot design—was a bright spot in the already-stellar pages of *Weird Science-Fantasy*.

But at the time he drew the first story—"I, Robot" in *Weird Science-Fantasy* #27 (1955)—it was only planned as a one-shot. "It was just assigned to me by Al Feldstein," Orlando says. "I thought it was going to be one story. But it got a lot of mail, it was very popular. They used to take votes—mail votes—on a story, and I got a lot of votes. They decided to continue, which was to the amazement of everybody, because it was really gentle and sweet kind of material, as opposed to the other material they were doing."

Binder—who met with Orlando only once—wrote the scripts, adapting his own stories. A decade later, Orlando started the Adam Link series over from scratch, drawing eight more Adam Link stories for Warren's black-and-white horror anthology magazine, *Creepy* (Link was revived at the suggestion of editor Archie Goodwyn). This time around,

"I LEARNED TO WALK IN THREE DAYS... FIRST ON MY KNEES BECAUSE I FOUND IT EASIER..."
"...THEN, LIKE A CHILD DISCOVERING THE THRILL OF ADDED HEIGHT, UPRIGHT..."
"DR. LINK PARADED UP AND DOWN IRRESPONSIBLE OAF..."

Adam Link learns to walk in this sequence drawn by Joe Orlando, from "I, Robot" in *Weird Fantasy* #11 (1952).

Orlando redesigned the robot and rendered him in ink and wash.

Today, Orlando is a top editor at DC. And he has never seen the *Outer Limits* TV series adaptation of "I, Robot." Does anybody out there have the episode on videocassette? C'mon! He's the definitive Adam Link artist, fer cryin' out loud!

WILL ELDER

Everyone knows one. The class clown. The office goof-off. The prank phone caller. The guy in the group photo who's making "bunny ears" with his fingers behind an unsuspecting someone's head. But this is the story of one ardent, accomplished master of the practical joke who found a way to make a living out of it. We should all be so lucky.

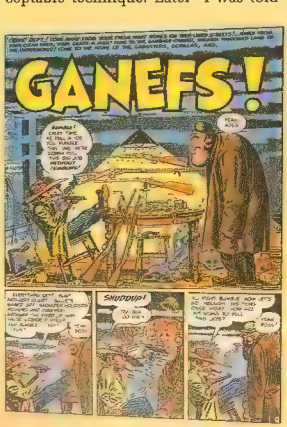
Look at any story Will Elder drew in those first, formative issues of EC's comic book-format *Mad*. His early pieces like "Ganefs!," "Mole!," "Dragged Net!" and "Shadow!" are packed with gags. You have to study them for hours to "get" everything he crams in. And it's the same with the *Little Annie Fanny* strips he and Harvey Kurtzman did in *Playboy* magazine. Jam-packed with laughs.

Your friend the office clown has an audience of three or four, and is rewarded with a few chuckles and perhaps a sideways glance from his boss. But Will Elder has made millions laugh since his first *Mad* story appeared 40 years ago.

Born in 1922 in the Bronx, Will Elder attended the High School of Music and Art. When Elder joined EC in 1951, he initially inked over John Severin's pencils, then drew occasional crime or horror solo stories. But Elder came into his own the following year, when he began drawing for Kurtzman's new humor magazine *Mad*. "That's true," the artist says. "When I did the straight stuff, I wasn't ready for it. It wasn't my forte. I was always a cut-up in school, always a practical joker. I used to take weeks planning practical jokes, just to get people's goats. It was kind of a sadistic nature in me, I have to admit.

"I used to relate these stories, and Bill (Gaines) and Harvey'd say, 'Do something with 'em!' And I would put them on paper. When *Mad* came along, here was complete freedom for me to become what I've always wanted to become—a cartoonist with his own ideas." Elder was one of the five contributors to the premiere issue of *Mad*, along with Kurtzman, Wally Wood, Severin and Jack Davis.

Elder's *Mad* stories revealed his penchant for tightly-rendered details and numerous sight gags. "That was pretty much how I set the pace," Elder says. "I thought this was acceptable technique. Later I was told



Will Elder's proclivity for numerous sight gags is displayed in the opening page of "Ganefs" from *Mad* #6 (1953).

by many people who followed my work that they'd never seen it done before. I was more or less pioneering in a thing that I always thought was in existence. Take the Marx Brothers. I was a great fan of the Marx Brothers, very much influenced by them. They would just take societal regimen and destroy it. They would laugh at authority. That, to me, was pleasure."

In 1956, Elder and Kurtzman left EC and collaborated on various ventures. In 1962, the pair kicked off the long-running strip *Little Annie Fanny* for *Playboy*. Kurtzman wrote and laid out the stories, which Elder executed in an illustrative cartoon style. "Sometimes the stories were very complicated," Elder says. "Many people roaming around. Thousands, perhaps. Casts of hundreds or casts of thousands. We did high technological throw-ins, such as machinery, robots, things of that sort. We'd have to draw every screw. We dwelled on authenticity. We thought what we were doing was correct. I think authenticity goes hand-in-hand with good humor."

AL WILLIAMSON

To you and me, they're just shoes, ties, hats. To Al Williamson—one EC artist who specialized in EC's excellent, respected science fiction stories—they're "civilian stuff." And in fact, Williamson's sci-fi specialization was his defense mechanism, his way of avoiding said shoes, ties, hats. "I conned them into giving me nothing but science fiction," Williamson tells CSS. "I was always afraid to draw civilian stuff."

WELL, SID? WHAT'S THE STORY? MAKE IT SNAPPY! WE'RE GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THAT... THAT SPACE-MONSTROSITY!
WE'D BETTER STEER CLEAR, DON! THAT PLANET HAS A DENSITY OF 271.96... WHICH IS NEARLY FIFTY TIMES THE DENSITY OF EARTH...

Dynamic science fiction scene drawn by Al Williamson, with background probably by his collaborator, the late Roy Krenkel. From "Snap Ending" in *Weird Science* #18 (1952).

Born in New York City in 1931, Williamson was a mere lad when he first started working for EC. "I was just 21, 22," the artist recalls. "Just a kid. It was more like fun for me. I know it was business for the other guys. Most of them were married. Some of them even had kids already.

"I always looked forward to going up there, because some of the best artists in the business were there. It was always great to see their work as they came in. 'Oh, you just missed Wally! He brought a job in!' And I'd look at it. It was very inspiring. Guys like Johnny Craig used to work right in there, and Johnny was one of my favorite artists. He's also a helluva nice guy."

On most of his EC stories, Williamson collaborated with the late Roy Krenkel. "Roy did a lot of the interiors of rocket ships and so forth for me," Williamson says. "Not all of it, but a lot. I just wanted to draw figures, and dinosaurs and stuff like that. Although I did do some of the rockets and interiors myself. I never felt that what Roy did was just backgrounds, like a picture on a wall. These backgrounds had something. They were the atmosphere. Between the two of us—since we didn't live on this planet; we were somewhere else—we conveyed that sense of fantasy. The sense of another world. Roy was so good at that. I wanted to live in his cities."

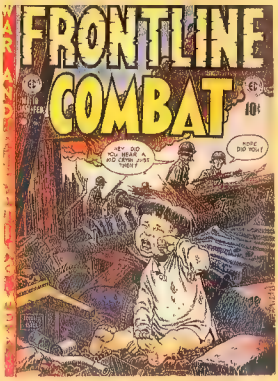
He went on to become a prolific *Creepy* artist (he contributed two stories to issue #1) and assisted John Prentice on *Rip Kirby*, the King Features syndicated newspaper strip (his fellow *Creepy* artists Angelo Torres and Gray Morrow also worked with Prentice on the strip). "I learned a lot from John," says. "How to do civilian. You know, shoes, ties, hats, stuff like that. Things that I dreaded. But I had gotten married and I needed the job. So I figured, 'Well, Al, you have to learn. Reality has set in. You gotta learn how to draw ties and shoes!'"

JOHN SEVERIN

One expression pops up incessantly when speaking with John Severin about his 45 years as a comics artist: "I had a lot of fun." He says it so often, you might consider it his credo. People today know him as the number-one artist at Cracked magazine—where his artwork has appeared for over 30 years—but John Severin holds an important place in the history of the medium as a contributor to *Mad* #1, a prolific EC artist, a master of the war and western genres, and a proponent and practitioner of realism in comics.

Severin's distinctive style is distinguished by clean layouts, close attention to proportion and perspective (although he can be cartoony when he deems it appropriate) and a flair for period settings and details. Severin enjoys jumping around from genre to genre. "As long as they pay," the artist says, "I like doing most anything except love stories."

Born in Jersey City in 1921, John Powers Severin attended the High School of Music and Art in Manhattan. His first published artwork appeared when he was only 12, and he landed his first job in comics in 1947. In 1953, Severin joined up with William Gaines' EC line, drawing primarily for the two action titles edited by *Mad*-creator-to-be Harvey Kurtzman. The Kurtzman titles—*Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat*—were renowned for their stories set in various eras (westerns, Civil War, ancient Rome, World War II, etc.), and for the authenticity in detail presented by the artists. This was Severin's stock-in-trade.



John Severin is a master of the war genre—and realism in general. Here's a Severin cover from *Frontline Combat* #10 (1952).

"I've always been interested in that," Severin says. "It adds color to the thing to do it right. It's just silly to do a period article and not have the correct costuming in there, because that's part of the feel of the whole thing. I did my own research for the most part. I'd always been interested in doing things in an accurate way, an authentic way. It's part of being a realist artist. If it ain't real, it ain't real."

In 1952, Gaines suggested to Kurtzman that he knock off a humor title between *Two-Fisted Tales* and *Frontline Combat* in order to bolster his salary. Kurtzman then created Mad, and John Severin was one of the four artists to contribute to the groundbreaking first issue, along with Jack Davis, Wally Wood and Will Elder (Kurtzman drew the cover). "Harvey, Willie and I had talked about who all should be in the book," Severin recalls. "Harvey didn't want to be in it, though we insisted he be in it. Because his stuff is just so whimsical, it would be a wonderful contrast to the rest of the goofball stuff that he wrote. But he didn't want to. Woody was a foregone conclusion. We were going to have him in it. We decided to get this young fella from Atlanta, a guy by the name of Jack Davis (laughs). So that was about it. Harvey wrote the scripts. He did those absolutely fabulous layouts for the jobs for everybody. And we took off."

The late Wally Wood contributed the science fiction parody "Blobs" to *Mad* #1. "He was very taciturn, had a very dry humor," said Severin of Wood, who committed suicide at age 52 in 1979. "A very interesting character and a lot of fun. The first time I saw him, he was carrying around a portfolio that was stretched so far with artwork, it looked like a valise! And everything in there was fabulous. It was unbelievable that this guy was up there all by himself doing all this work, and finally came down to New York to see if he could get a job. His stuff was just remarkable. And he stayed that way right up to the very end, until his eyes started to go on him.

"Woody had done that remarkable job on *Prince Valiant* (for *Mad*), simulating Hal Foster's style. He had used just tons of zippotone* all over the story to simulate the armor and so forth in black and white. Harvey stacked it up neatly and put it on top of the tray that sits on top of the radiator. The next morning, he came in and picked up the job to look at it. And when he did, all the little pieces of zippotone flew all over the room! Wally had to come in and get a whole bunch of zippotone and put it on the whole job all over again. Harvey nearly had a stroke on the spot!"

Severin recalls the feeling of doom in the EC office during the senate subcommittee investigation of juvenile delinquency in 1954, in which comic books—particularly those put out by EC—were used as a scapegoat. "When Bill was appearing at the Kefauver committee, most everybody was in his office at the time waiting for him on TV," Severin reminisces. "We just sat and watched throughout the whole thing. I'm sure Harvey and Willy Elder were there. My sister (colorist Marie Severin) was there. Maybe Joe Orlando, Wally Wood—I don't remember exactly. But there were at least six, seven people at the

office that day. No amusement there."

In 1958, Severin appeared in the first issue of *Cracked*, a *Mad* imitator he has been with ever since; *Cracked* is now approaching its 300th issue. With an average of three pieces per issue in *Cracked*, John Severin is as prolific as ever at age 70. "I intend dying with my boots on," the artist laughs. "With a pen in my hand."

** Zippotone is a brand of film meticulously cut and applied to line art which adds a screen of tiny dots that appear in print as a grey tone.*

MARIE SEVERIN

There's a reason we saved EC colorist Marie Severin for last. It's only fitting, because in the halcyon days of EC, she was the final worker on the "assembly line" to make a creative contribution to EC's stories. "When I was coloring the books at EC, in my own head I realized that I was helping to tell a story," Severin tells CSS. "I was the last person. What I was supplying was like the background music."

EC publisher William Gaines has a stock anecdote about Severin—that she was "EC's only censor," painting scenes she found objectionable dark purple. Though an amusing little aside, Severin insists that Gaines is just doing schtick. "I would have no right to do that," the colorist says. "And I never would do it to obliterate art. No. As a matter of fact, I very rarely used purple, because it wouldn't let you see the black line.

"A lot of times, I would clarify by using what came to be known as 'knock-outs.' Like, in a war scene if there was an explosion and guys went flying all around, there would be so much equipment on them and so forth that you couldn't color them realistically, because it would get muddy. So I would put a knock-out of either red or yellow, and you'd see the artwork. In the horror books, sometimes it would add a little mood.

"Blue is about as bad as I got, or a red with a little blue in it. But I never did it with the intention of blocking the art. The printing might have been heavy. What I was doing was subduing, but believe me, I never took on the editorial stuff. If they didn't like what I did, they would have changed it.

"Color is psychological. If you have a muddy-looking coloring on a story, it's going to effect your mood. And in comics, we don't have facial movement. We have a panel or maybe a continuity of panels. The main thing we have going for us is a good story. Absolutely. And, hopefully, you can combine that with a good artist."

Which of the EC artists was the most difficult to color? "Wally Wood," Severin says, "because he sometimes, like Jack Kirby, would draw a bandoleer or a belt, and in the next panel it was gone. If you had established a bright color on that, or a distinguishing thing from page to page, you had to make sure it'd carry through. But Wally was also the most satisfying, because of all his crazy highlights that he put in. His science fiction would come out so glitzy. Nobody was doing that."

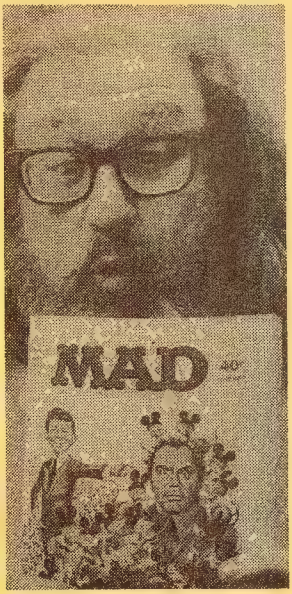
After EC, Severin worked for Stan Lee at Marvel, doing "just everything—production, coloring, cover design, whatever needed to be done." In the late '60s, Severin pencilled *The Hulk* and *Dr. Strange*. Severin was one of very few female artists working in a male-dominated field at a time when women weren't in the work force. Regardless, she says she never encountered gender prejudice. "Men were a lot more gentlemanly in those days, because they weren't afraid of women," Severin says. "Especially (the EC) guys. Nobody there ever refused any question, to show me how to do something. I was taught an awful lot there. People are not jealous of information unless they're not sure of themselves.

"EC really spoiled me for other outfits, because it was a small outfit, and everybody was so good at what they did. It was a great situation." CSS

GRAY CLOUDS OF DEATH!
LOOK!
THERE IT IS!
IN RESPONSE TO THE AGITATED LOOKWORD ON THE VIEWSCREEN, CAPTAIN JARN IS MOVED THROUGH THE EQUIPMENT-LINED CORRIDOR OF THE HEAVILY ARMED PRIVATE VIEW
SEE FOR YOURSELF, CAPTN'S! IT'S EPIC
ALL RIGHT... ALL RIGHT! WHAT'S THE SELLING ABOUT?
XXXX

Colorist Marie Severin calls the late Wally Wood the biggest challenge to color. She cites his gleaming, metallic space ship backgrounds. There is no better example of Wood's work—and Severin's coloring of it—than this splash page from "Gray Clouds of Death" in *Weird Science* #9 (1951).

The cover of Crime Suspenstories #22 (1954) by Johnny Craig. This cover was the subject of the infamous debate between Bill Gaines and Senate Subcommittee Chairman Estes Kefauver.



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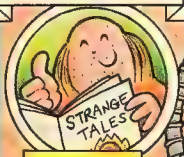
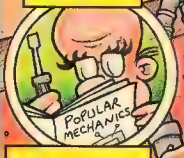
ONE FLEW OVER THE COMIC SHOP

A COMICTOONS *PARODY* STARRING:



JOE BURNS
. . . IN A FOG!



PROFESSOR BOMAR
. . . IN A QUANDARY!

CANDY LISSIUS
. . . IN A HEARTBEAT!

AWW, ***JOE!*** NOT ***ANOTHER*** ONE! THIS FIRE-TRAP IS GETTIN' ***CROWDED!***

POOF!

HEE . . . HEE . . . I'M ♫ ***HOME!*** ♫

STORY AND ART:
'MAD MARK' VOGER
WITH LOVING HOMAGE TO (AND SWIPES FROM) JACK KIRBY, STAN LEE, KURT SCHAFFENBERGER, ANGELO TORRES AND ARCHIE GOODWYN!

(DISCLAIMER: THE CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY AREN'T ***REALLY*** SUPPOSED TO BE WHO YOU THINK THEY ARE! IT'S ALL FOR ***LAUGHS,*** SEE? A ***PARODY,*** LIKE MAD MAGAZINE OR "SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE"! OKAY . . . ***GOT*** THAT?

RRRRRRRR

CAN YA ***BELIEVE*** IT? I NOW OWN GALACTUS' HAT! ***GALACTUS!*** THE GUY WHO SUCKS WHOLE PLANETS DRY OF THEIR ENERGY!

WOOPTY POOPTY!

DON'CHA WANNA HEAR HOW I ***NABBED*** IT?

"I ***TRIPPED*** TO ***FANTASTIC FOUR*** #49 . . . GALACTUS WAS ASSEMBLING HIS ***LIFE ESSENCE EXTRACTOR*** ATOP THE ***BAXTER BUILDING!"***

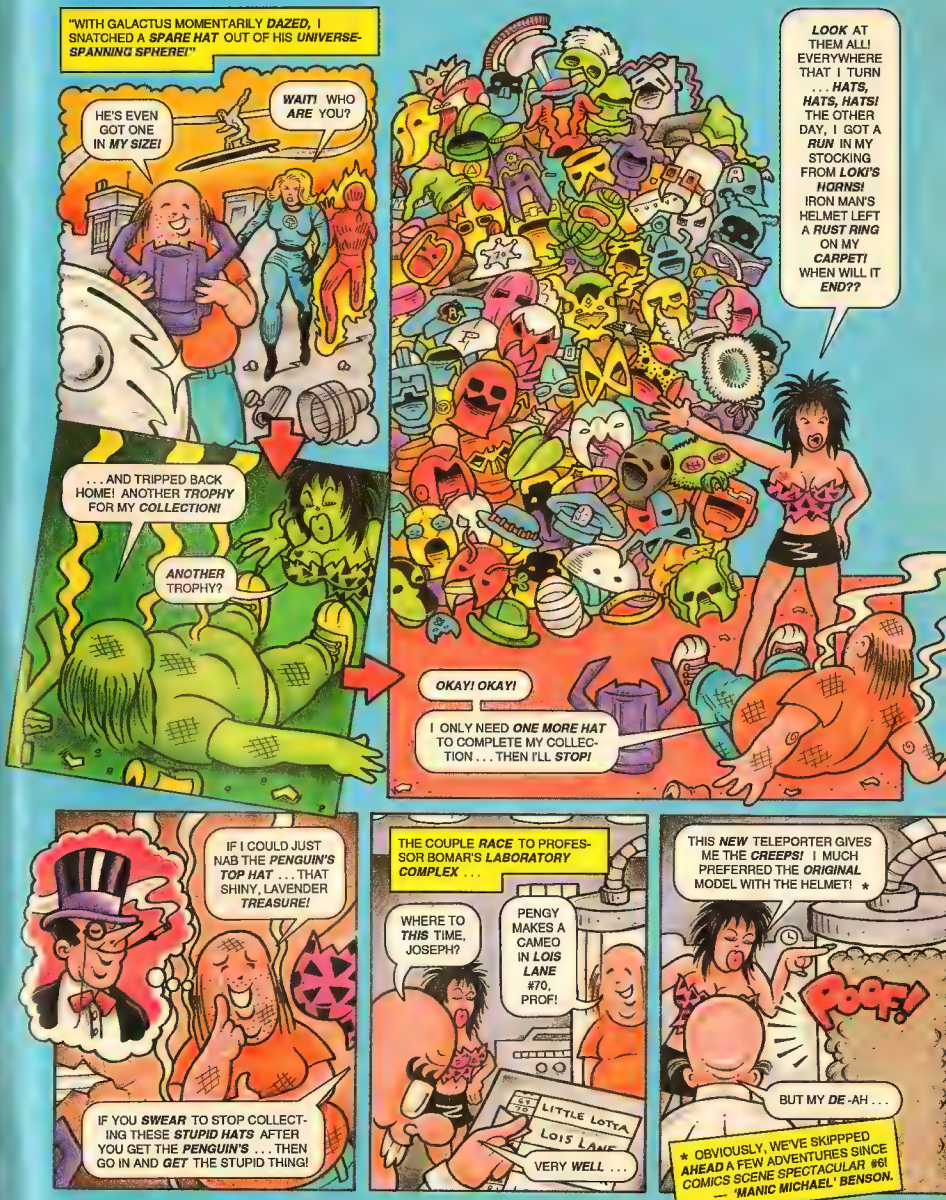
PUNY EARTHLING INSECTS!

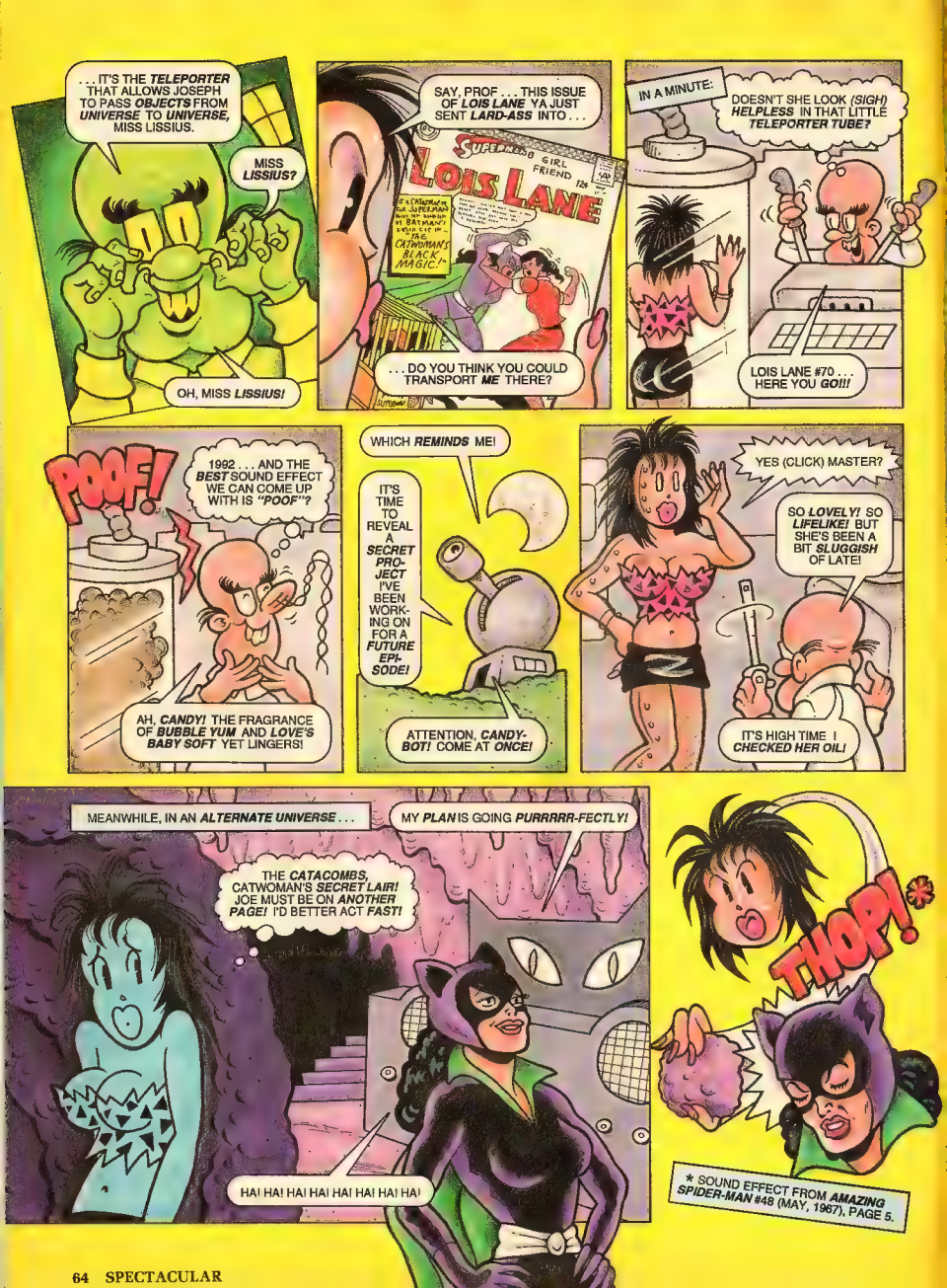
"REED ROLLED HIMSELF INTO A ***CANNONBALL,*** AND BEN ***LOBBED*** HIM AT THE ***BIG G!"***

BULL'S EYE!

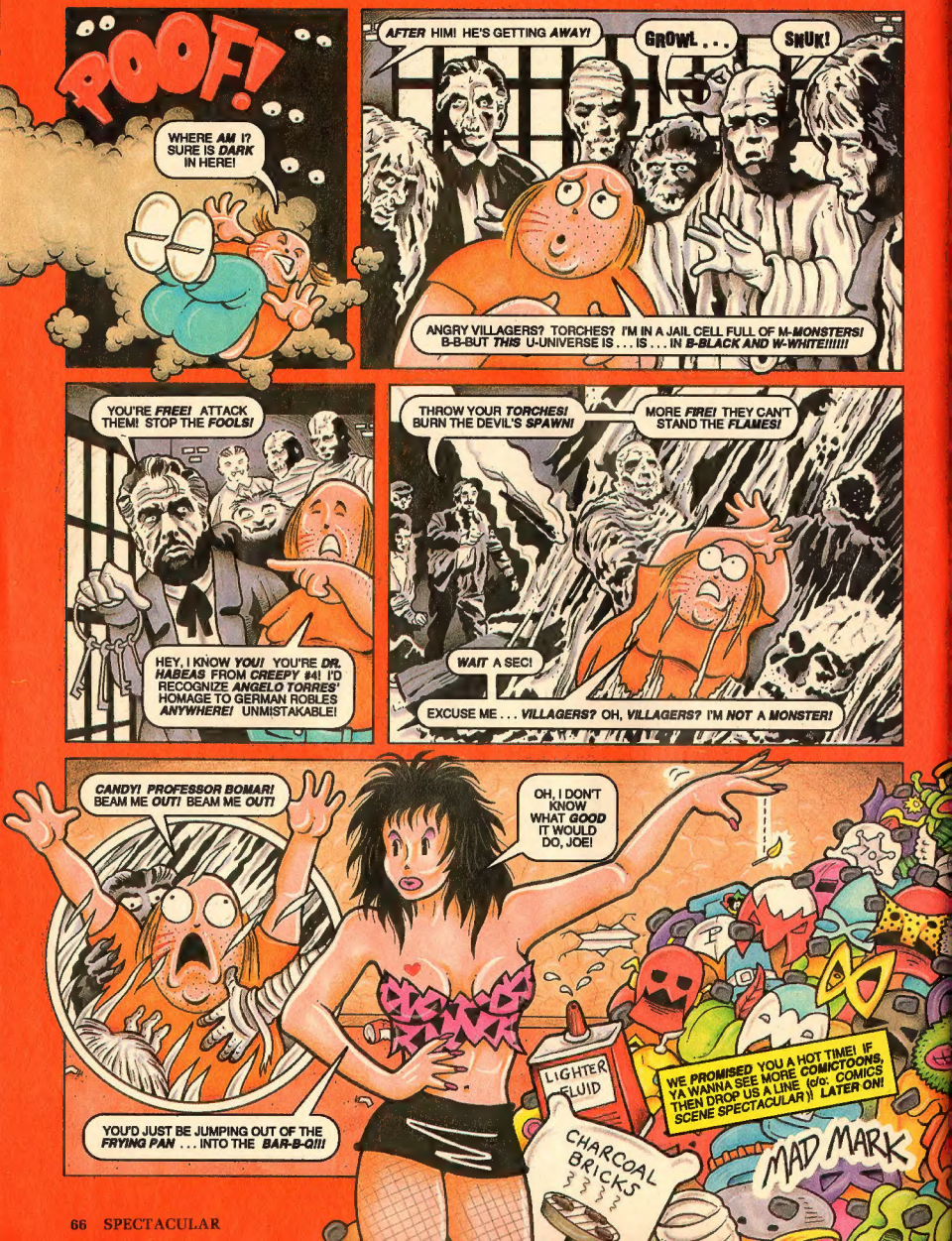
WOK!

S'GETTIN' ***WACKY*** AROUND HERE!


"WITH GALACTUS MOMENTARILY *DAZED*, I SNATCHED A *SPARE HAT* OUT OF HIS *UNIVERSE-SPANNING SPHERE!*"
HE'S EVEN GOT ONE IN *MY SIZE!*
WAIT! WHO *ARE* YOU?
. . . AND TRIPPED BACK HOME! ANOTHER *TROPHY* FOR MY *COLLECTION!*
ANOTHER TROPHY?
LOOK AT THEM ALL! EVERYWHERE THAT I TURN . . . *HATS, HATS, HATS!* THE OTHER DAY, I GOT A *RUN* IN MY STOCKING FROM *LOKI'S HORNS!* IRON MAN'S HELMET LEFT A *RUST RING* ON MY *CARPET!* WHEN WILL IT *END??*
OKAY! OKAY!
I ONLY NEED *ONE MORE HAT* TO COMPLETE MY COLLECTION . . . THEN I'LL *STOP!*
IF I COULD JUST NAB THE *PENGUIN'S TOP HAT* . . . THAT SHINY, LAVENDER *TREASURE!*
IF YOU *SWEAR* TO STOP COLLECTING THESE *STUPID HATS* AFTER YOU GET THE *PENGUIN'S* . . . THEN GO IN AND *GET* THE STUPID THING!
THE COUPLE *RACE* TO PROFESSOR BOMAR'S *LABORATORY COMPLEX* . . .
WHERE TO *THIS* TIME, JOSEPH?
PENGY MAKES A CAMEO IN *LOIS LANE* #70, PROF!
LITTLE LOTTA
LOIS LANE
VERY *WELL* . . .
THIS *NEW* TELEPORTER GIVES ME THE *CREEPS!* I MUCH PREFERRED THE *ORIGINAL* MODEL WITH THE HELMET! *
POOF!
BUT MY *DE*-AH . . .
* OBVIOUSLY, WE'VE SKIPPPED *AHEAD* A FEW ADVENTURES SINCE *COMICS SCENE SPECTACULAR* #6! — *'MANIC MICHAEL' BENSON.*


. . . IT'S THE TELEPORTER THAT ALLOWS JOSEPH TO PASS OBJECTS FROM UNIVERSE TO UNIVERSE, MISS LISSIUS.
MISS LISSIUS?
OH, MISS LISSIUS!
SAY, PROF . . . THIS ISSUE OF LOIS LANE YA JUST SENT LARD-ASS INTO . . .
SUPERMAN'S GIRL FRIEND
LOIS LANE
. . . DO YOU THINK YOU COULD TRANSPORT ME THERE?
IN A MINUTE:
DOESN'T SHE LOOK (SIGH) HELPLESS IN THAT LITTLE TELEPORTER TUBE?
LOIS LANE #70 . . . . HERE YOU GO!!!
POOF!
1992 . . . AND THE BEST SOUND EFFECT WE CAN COME UP WITH IS "POOF"?
AH, CANDY! THE FRAGRANCE OF BUBBLE YUM AND LOVE'S BABY SOFT YET LINGERS!
WHICH REMINDS ME!
IT'S TIME TO REVEAL A SECRET PROJECT I'VE BEEN WORKING ON FOR A FUTURE EPISODE!
ATTENTION, CANDY-BOT! COME AT ONCE!
YES (CLICK) MASTER?
SO LOVELY! SO LIFELIKE! BUT SHE'S BEEN A BIT SLUGGISH OF LATE!
IT'S HIGH TIME I CHECKED HER OIL!
MEANWHILE, IN AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE . . .
MY PLAN IS GOING PURRRRR-FECTLY!
THE CATACOMBS, CATWOMAN'S SECRET LAIR! JOE MUST BE ON ANOTHER PAGE! I'D BETTER ACT FAST!
HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!
THOP!*
* SOUND EFFECT FROM AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #48 (MAY, 1967), PAGE 5.

I DIG THIS FELINE FEMALE'S FANCY DUDS!
SO I'LL START A LITTLE COLLECTION OF MY OWN . . .
MOANN
. . . AND TEST JOE'S LOYALTY AT THE SAME TIME!
A SECOND LATER:
YO, CAT-WOMAN! NICE DIGS! HAVE YOU SEEN THE PENGUIN?
FORGET ABOUT THAT CORPULENT CAD . . .
. . . AND JOIN ME IN A SPOT OF CAT-NIP!
IT'LL REALLY REV YOU UP!
BUT . . . BUT . . .
SLURRRRRRPP!
YOU MONSTER! YOU BELONG IN A CAGE!
MONSTER? CAGE? WHA??
THWAAM!*
* SOUND EFFECT FROM META-MORPHO #7 (JULY, 1966), PAGE 8.
HAH! ONCE AGAIN, PHYSICAL CONTACT INDUCES A DIMENSIONAL CROSSOVER!
I WONDER WHERE THE FAT SLOB IS OFF TO NOW?


POOF!
WHERE AM I? SURE IS DARK IN HERE!
AFTER HIM! HE'S GETTING AWAY!
GROWL . . .
SNUK!
ANGRY VILLAGERS? TORCHES? I'M IN A JAIL CELL FULL OF M-MONSTERS! B-B-BUT THIS U-UNIVERSE IS . . . IS . . . IN B-BLACK AND W-WHITE!!!!!!
YOU'RE FREE! ATTACK THEM! STOP THE FOOLS!
HEY, I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE DR. HABEAS FROM CREEPY #4! I'D RECOGNIZE ANGELO TORRES' HOMAGE TO GERMAN ROBLES ANYWHERE! UNMISTAKABLE!
THROW YOUR TORCHES! BURN THE DEVIL'S SPAWN!
MORE FIRE! THEY CAN'T STAND THE FLAMES!
WAIT A SEC!
EXCUSE ME . . . VILLAGERS? OH, VILLAGERS? I'M NOT A MONSTER!
CANDY! PROFESSOR BOMAR! BEAM ME OUT! BEAM ME OUT!
OH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOOD IT WOULD DO, JOE!
YOU'D JUST BE JUMPING OUT OF THE FRYING PAN . . . INTO THE BAR-B-Q!!!
LIGHTER FLUID
CHARCOAL BRICKS
WE PROMISED YOU A HOT TIME! IF YA WANNA SEE MORE COMICTOONS, THEN DROP US A LINE (c/o: COMICS SCENE SPECTACULAR)! LATER ON!
MAD MARK

NEW!

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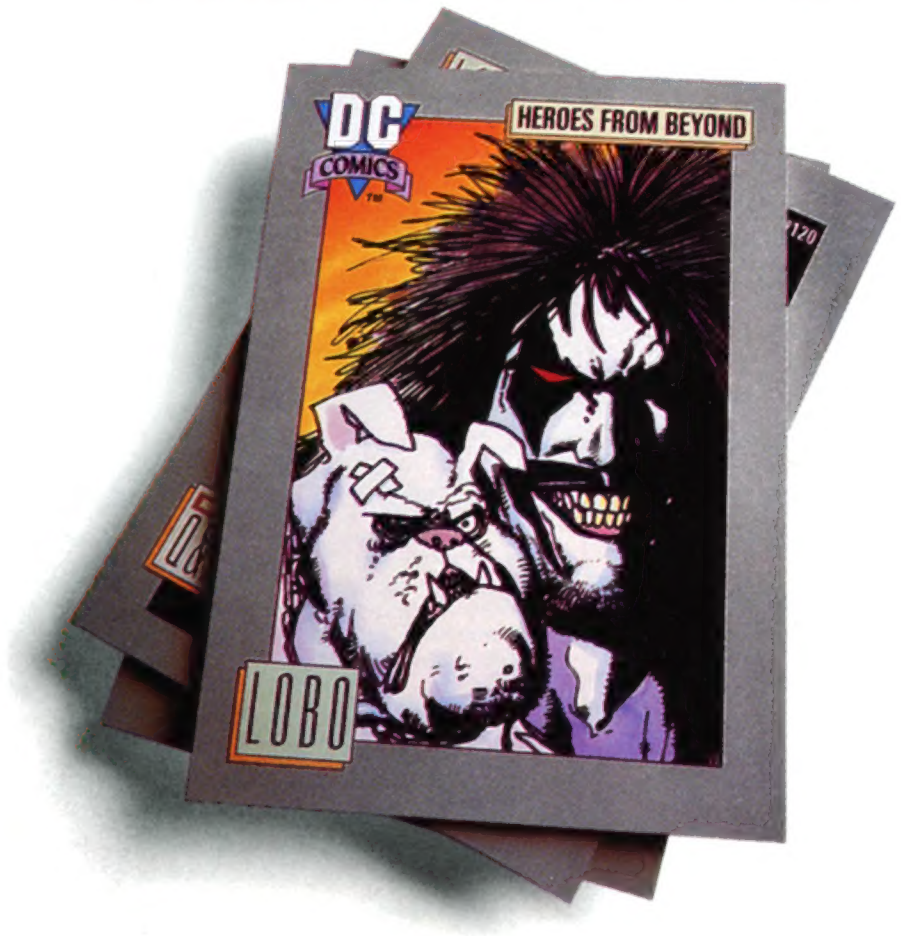

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